

TO WHOM THE TRIBUTE IN THIS BOOK

I

We have not come to call attention to Jewish preponderance, which is no longer necessary; still less to advocate it, which would be wrong, but we have come to explain it.

We vaguely know that it was born of the French Revolution, but we ignore the circumstances and events of its genesis. This book tells the story.

It is a birth certificate that we take the liberty of passing before the eyes of M. Sadi Carnot, the current President of the French Republic, before the eyes of the National Assembly, which recently emerged from the comices of September 1889, and before the eyes of the Members of these loyal Provincial Assemblies, which, from one end of France to the other, have brought together in
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a beautiful patriotic synthesis of the old and the new.

The tribute is addressed first to M. Sadi Carnot, because the father of Monsieur le Président de la République wrote the life of the man who was the main agent of Jewish emancipation at the Constituent Assembly, the priest-deputy Grégoire¹. The biographer has kept closer to the truth than to the truth itself. Better informed by these pages, which solicit the honor of being read, the Head of State will perhaps judge it opportune to preserve the Elysée Palace from the Hebraic influence bequeathed to it by his father's house¹ 2.

Next, in our tribute, we name the National Assembly that emerged from the September 1889 comices, because it is reminiscent, both in name and date, of the first French assembly to bear the burden of dealing with the Jewish question for the first time. The expression won't seem too strong, once you've read the book. From 1789 to 1791, the National Assembly, now the Constituent Assembly, had the nightmare of this question. In the event that the National Assembly of 1889 were to be seized of the matter again during its current legislature (which would by no means be impossible), it remains to be seen whether it would resign itself to the hesitations and perplexities of its predecessor, and whether, in the end, it would capitulate, like it did, to the Jews.

Could we have forgotten, in our tribute, the members of the Provincial Assemblies of this centenary? Taking up, with admirable breadth of vision and precision, all the questions contained in the cahiers of 1789, they deliberated on the Israelite question only with an eighth reservation, solely with regard to hoarding and agio—its principal debtors." The Israelites' recognition of the Carnot family dates from this period (for further details, see the *Moniteur* of May 28, 1841, and the *Archives Israélites*, year 1841. p. 345–351).

They lacked the authentic documents to judge contemporary Israelism on other points. Please allow us to present them with these documents: they may prove useful to them, should the reins of power return to their hands. The noble and measured terms they used with regard to the Israelites, in their recent and all too short deliberation², prove that they would know how to combat and ward off the Semitic peril by not harming those two holy things: the glories of the Jewish people and of the Israelites.

¹ Vœu de l'Assemblée générale des délégués de province tenue à Paris: lo Que l'agiotage, les spéculations immorales et les coalitions tendant à amener la hausse ou la baisse fictive des produits de toute nature, mais surtout des denrées alimentaires, soient sévèrement puniés par la loi;

² That the authorities, inspired solely by the national interest, endeavor to remove from Jewish banks all influence over the State's financial operations, loans and markets.

² Here, in fact, is the language used by Count de Nicolay at the general meeting of provincial delegates in Paris:

"The Commission recognized that, respectable in itself – for in the midst of universal indifference the Jewish nation has managed to preserve its faith, its morals and the invincible hope of the recovery of its altars – it is no less formidable for Christian society, because, camped rather than established in the midst of nations, it professes and practises there, to our detriment, economic principles opposed to the principles of Christian morality, economic principles which it itself considers so reprehensible that, while seeking to benefit from them in its relations with Christian nations, it is careful not to apply them at home.

"Consequently, the Commission considers that until Jesus Christ has enlightened with his divine light these intelligences, so well made however to know him and to work to spread the glory of his name, it is necessary that all men concerned with our ancient reputation of honor and French probity repudiate highly the disastrous economic principles and regrettable financial practices that the Jewish nation has spread among us, and avoid those strange compromises and too frequent relationships whose danger too recent catastrophes have shown us abundantly. He is also concerned with "the ancient people of God, and the movement of conversions to Catholicism.

He

It is a birth certificate, we have said, that we place before eyes capable of appreciating it.

The birth certificate, in fact, can be written as follows:

JEWISH PREPONDERANCE

Is born of the Rights of Man and dechristianized France, in the premises of the National Assembly: from August 14, 1789 to September 27, 1791, the duration of this laborious birth.

Once exposed, this preponderance was to grow. Its development will be the subject of subsequent studies. Let's take a look at an apologue grafted onto a historical moment to illustrate its prodigious growth: "La Révolution fera le tour du monde" (The Revolution will tour the world), announced Mirabeau one day. Keeping his word, the Revolution set out on its journey;

Right at the start of its gigantic tour, it was approached by a singular companion: the Jew-errant. They look at each other and say: let's unite.

"I'm starting the world tour," adds Revolution, with youthful eagerness.

"I've been doing it for eighteen centuries," replies the Jew-errant, "I'll guide you!"

Since then, all continents and all peoples have seen them pass together.

This apologue suffices to illustrate the rapid increase in Jewish preponderance.

Obviously, the Jews had everything to gain in the company of the Revolution. They no longer had to argue with governments for their livelihood, as they had in the past: the Revolution argued on their behalf. They will no longer fight as they did in the Middle Ages: the Revolution fights for them. All they have to do is let their young, savage ally do as she pleases, only stirring her up when she doesn't advance fast enough on their side: march, march!

At the time we are writing this preface, Jewish preponderance (to speak only of its development in France) is energetically described in these reflections from the newspaper *l'Univers*, concerning the circular from the Chief Rabbi of Paris on the centenary of 1789 :

1 In this circular addressed to his co-religionists, dated May 3, M. Zadoc Kahn, Chief Rabbi of Paris, announces that a public service

"Aren't the Jews at home in France? They've only been there for a hundred years, and already they've half conquered it. Soon it will be all theirs. Don't they own the land, the money, the influence? Don't they have the government and the press? At present, M. de Rothschild and his co-religionists are more masters in France than the President of the Republic and his ministers. They reign at the Stock Exchange, and that palace is the true center of power and action. –

How far we've come, great God, from the birth certificate presented above to this stranglehold on the

government of France!

But the sons of Israel have themselves erected the wooden barrier that subjugates and humiliates all preponderance: the Cross!

It alone can be the salvation of modern society, and their salvation in modern society.

A thanksgiving service will be held in all French synagogues on the occasion of the 1789 Centenary celebrations.

1 Journal [l'Univers, il mai 1889.

Lyon, G October 1889.

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PREPONDENCE

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CHAPTER ONE

PHILOSOPHISM'S DANGEROUS INITIATIVE

IN THE OPENING

OF A COMPETITION IN METZ IN FAVOR OF THE JEWS (1785-1788)

I. A painful contrast which, from the revolution of 1789 onwards, will fill the history of the French people and take on ever-increasing proportions: Christ rejected and the Jews admitted into society. - II. Such a contrast can only be made by such a great people if a poisonous, drowsy beverage has first robbed them of a clear view of what they are about to do. What is this beverage? Revolutionary liberalism. -

111 The first public test of liberalism in a competition held in favor of Jews in the city of Metz, in 1788.

- IV. Significance of the choice of Metz for this contest. - V. Its holding and duration. Dangers revealed.

- VI. Abbé Grégoire, parish priest of Emberméuil near Lunéville, makes a name for himself and wins the prize.

I

Two facts of incalculable gravity are juxtaposed at the start of the French Revolution: the dismissal of Christ and the admission of the Jews.

Jewish preponderance.

Throughout this book, we have recounted in minute detail the way in which these two events were brought about and occurred, and here we confine ourselves to presenting their precise formula:

First historical fact: Christ rejected at the head of the Declaration of the Rights of Man;

Second historical fact: Jews admitted to society, by virtue of the same Declaration of Rights.

These gentle facts, linked together, recall a painful contrast from the past: the preference given to Barabbas over Jesus; consequently the exchange of Barabbas for Jesus, since the august son of David belonged, in his own right, to the people of Israel, by his blood, his miracles, his patriotism. They recall this preference, this exchange; alas! they were also to lead the French people into phases of disappointment, decadence and impoverishment, where the Jews were the first to step.

A word about this unfortunate primacy:

The immense clamor: "May his blood fall on us and on our children!" was not, for the Jewish people, the most calamitous episode of the Passion, although it was the most serious. The reason for this is that Christ's blood here on earth excludes no-one from its effluvia of mercy and tenderness. It purifies, in a dew of love and refreshment, the Jews as well as any other men, as soon as these poor blind men, remembering the blessed Passion (sweet and consoling expressions of the holy Liturgy *), con-

1 These words are inscribed in the Canon of the Mass. The priest pronounces them immediately after the Consecration, in the presence of the precious Blood. feel to benefit from the divine blood. The most calamitous episode of the Passion, a source of ignominy and disaster for the people of Israel, was the preference given to Barabbas over Jesus.

The Righteous One, the benefactor of Judea, is contrasted with an infamous thief and murderer. An indescribable vociferation indicates the preference: Barabbas! Pilate insists on giving the Jews time to reconsider their choice. With even greater fury, they reply: Not this one, but Barabbas! These men, whose exasperation knows no bounds, do not even deign to say Jesus, to pronounce his name, as it seems to them that to pronounce it would defile their mouths; they cry out: This one! no, we no longer want him; it is Barabbas we choose!

The results of the exchange were not long in coming. In the past, Israel was a very noble nation, with a great figure, notwithstanding the faults opposed by Moses and the Prophets. But if, for nineteen centuries, O Israelites of the dispersion, you have been reputed plunderers and deceivers, if you have been considered people of nothing and rapine, if the accusation of homicide against Christians has even, at times, been levelled at you, you bear, in this degrading transmission, the consequence of the choice made by your ancestors, before Pontius-Pilate. Didn't they prefer a thief to the royal son of David? Didn't they prefer false keys to the scepter?

A preference, not so categorical, perhaps brought about surreptitiously, but no less deplorable, was one day to be displayed in the history of the people of France. It would also involve an exchange. We call it this: Christ rejected and the Jews admitted into society. In Judea, the cry was: Grace to Barabbas, death to Christ! In France, the cry was: Christ out, Jews in! The laws were the expression of this gloomy contrast. Laws express the thoughts and wills of a people. If, at one hour in the life of the French people, the same laws have said to Christ: Get out! and to the Jews: Get in! a great misdeed has been committed. The exchange, for France, will be all too real: by taking away Christ, we give her the Jews! What a disproportion, O heaven!

Christ rejected from the new social order, while the Jews are admitted: a gloomy and painful contrast, an affront to the Divinity which was not accomplished, as in Jerusalem, in the effervescence of a single morning, but over time, with frightening calm, after a series of events brought about by inexorable logic. This affront was not a criminal act, explicit and swift, as was the preference of Barabbas over Jesus; but it was the consequence of criminal ideas, of criminal doctrines, given that, since Christianity, people have led themselves only by ideas. The affront and the contrast descended, slowly and gradually, from the gestures of the Constituante, into the gestures of the country, spread like a dark stain, and now what do all eyes see, willy-nilly? This: Christ loudly rejected everywhere, and the Jews superbly admitted everywhere. For the painful expansion of the contrast, Providence allowed a century!

Among the spectators and victims of the dark tragedy at the end of the last century, perhaps only one, with her intuition as a Christian woman and princess of France, foresaw what was to come: Madame Elisabeth. The day after the Constituent Assembly admitted Jews to all positions, the royal princess wrote to Madame de Bombelles:

Yesterday, the Assembly put the last nail in the coffin of all its foolishness and irreligion by giving Jews the right to be admitted to all jobs. I can't tell you how angry I am about this decree. But God has his days of vengeance, and 'if he suffers evil for a long time, he does not punish it with less force'. x-- And yet the pious princess saw only part of the truth! She points out, in connection with the irreligions of the Assembly that arouse her anger, the entry of the Jews, she did not think of the contrast with the dismissal of Christ.

It is this contrast that we are about to highlight.

II

First and foremost, we asked ourselves this question: How could such a contrast "the dismissal of Christ and the admission of the Jews" have come about in the land of France? It's not in cold blood, when you call yourself France, that you say to Christ: Get out,

1 Correspondance de Marie-Antoinette et de Madame Élisabeth, by M. Feuillet de Couches-Archives

Israélites, 18G4, page 823. and to the Jews: Come in. There must have been something beforehand to disturb the reason of the most enlightened people on earth, the most religious, the most courteous in their forms and the most chivalrous in their ways. In fact, a great cause of trouble prepared this contrast. At the end of the XVth century, France was drinking from a poisoned, drowsy cup. A perfidious beverage was beginning to upset her temperament.

What was it?

The Revolution, brilliant, bold, fascinating and terrible like an Athalie or an Agrippina, was bound, like those ambitious women of ancient times, to proceed with cunning and to stop at nothing. All jobs are good for those consumed by ambition! From the outset, the Revolution has been a poisoner, but with art and skill, recalling and surpassing the schemes of Agrippina and Locustus.

Let's think back for a moment to pagan Rome:

Locustus is a famous poisoner from the time of the Caesars. Her first task was to kill Emperor Claudius, on Agrippina's orders. She is called to the Council, and asked to put some genius into her crucibles: too quick a poison would make Claudius' murder obvious; too slow a poison would give him time to recognize himself, and restore the rights of Britannicus, his son. Locust understands, and finds something sought-after in poison, which will confuse reason and only slowly extinguish the lie\ A eunuch makes the unfortunate Caesar take the poison

1 Tacitus, Ann., XII, 69. - Suét, in Claud, 45 - Champaony, Les Césars, II, 161, 5.

in a mushroom that he savors with delight: he dies dazed!

A year later, Locust rids Nero of the troublesome Britannicus. This time, she is asked not for a slow, timid, secret poison, like the one she had so exquisitely composed for Claudius, but an active, swift, lightning poison. Britannicus dropped dead at the imperial table.

Locust had pupils, and Nero allowed her to train disciples and run a school of poisoning. Indeed, history and painting depict her trying out her venoms on unfortunate slaves, some of whom writhe at her feet, others going mad³.

Let's return to our own time.

Who would ever have thought that Locust could be surpassed? The Revolution has taken charge of this sinister progress.

Indeed, since the appearance of Christianity in the world, everything has taken on a higher, more spiritualized form, even evil, even poisoning. Minds and morals are poisoned in the same way as bodies used to be: with genius! Didn't we say, in the Christian centuries, the poison of heresy, the poison of error? The shadow of Locust was certainly already haunting the conciliabula of Manichaeism, Arianism, Calvinism and Voltairianism; but, at the date of 1789, the Revolution, inspired by the poisoner and eager to surpass her, imagined in the intellectual and social order something sought-after in terms of poison, which would disturb reason and extinguish life among Christian peoples: what, then, did it imagine?

Liberalism

Indeed, to succeed in disturbing reason and slowly extinguishing life in a people like France, you need a beverage that is at once poison, philtre and narcotic:

Poison kills;

Philtre intoxicates;

The narcotic drowns.

All these effects are necessary to overcome the robust constitution of a Christian nation.

The aim is to kill Christian ideas; at the same time, to intoxicate generous souls; at the same time, to put honest people to sleep: all at the same time. Liberalism will be this skilful mixture, this terrible brew.

Break it down and you'll find the three elements: poison, philtre and narcotic.

Poison first:

i Leo XIII's Encyclical on Human Liberty (June 1888) absolutely condemns liberalism. Here's one of his striking passages:

"There are a great many who, following the example of Lucifer, from whom is this criminal word: I will not serve, understand by the name of liberty what is pure and absurd license. Such are those who belong to this widespread and powerful school, and who, borrowing their name from the word liberty, wish to be called liberals.

"And indeed, just as the proponents of naturalism and rationalism are in philosophy, so are these proponents of liberalism in the moral and civil order, since they introduce into morals and the practice of life the principles laid down by the proponents of naturalism. Now, the principle of all rationalism is the sovereign domination of human reason, which, refusing the obedience due to divine and eternal reason, and claiming to be its own authority, recognizes itself alone as the supreme principle, source and judge of truth – this is the claim of the followers of liberalism.

Just as poisonous plants can be found in the field, so can evil doctrines and pernicious opinions be found in the intellectual world. No matter how much the Church eradicates them, they reappear with the ease and tenacity of weeds: for example, the denial of original sin; again, the omnipotence of reason, to whose tribunal everything must submit, the sufficiency of human forces to make their own way, and the sufficiency of social forces to lead peoples. Poisonous by-products of all centuries, they had emerged and spread considerably under the philosophical influence of the XVth century. The Revolution had only to bend down to pick them up. They will form the first element of its terrible brew.

In addition to poison, the philtre :

In the treasure trove of human languages, there are words that have the power to arouse, intoxicate and enthrall: the magic words of liberty, fraternity and equality. The Gospel had purified these words, explained them, and, depositing in them a divine ferment, had broadened them so much that they expressed new ideas. As long as they had remained attached to the Gospel, they had penetrated and worked the world in a way that was all the more sure and salutary because it was gentle, balanced and respectful. But then, in the 15th century, philosophical thinking took hold of these words and explained them. Immediately, they lost their divine ferment and turned to philter*. The National Assembly in the 1 According to the divine Book of Revelation, there is a mouth that curses the Lamb and speaks the Lamb's horn: *Os loquens sicut Agnus*. The Lamb said in the Gospel: Freedom! If Christ delivers you, you, the famous night of August 4, 1789, which will be an intoxication without precedent in the history of peoples, will experience this philtre*. They are the second element in the enchanting and disastrous brew being prepared by the Revolution. The narcotic, finally, is a third element.

Among all the sentiments with which the human heart has been endowed, there is one that is distinguished by great nobility when truth is its guide, but which becomes an extreme danger when it is inspired only by itself: it is the sentiment of tolerance, of indulgence. Indeed, when it takes truth as its guide, tolerance translates into compassion for people; but it refuses to recognize errors: compassion for the person, disapproval of the error, such is the expression of Catholic tolerance. In con- will be free. – The cursed mouth repeats: Freedom. – The Lamb says: Brotherhood! You are all brothers: *Omnes vos fratres estis*. – The cursed mouth repeats: Fraternity! – The Lamb said: Equality! You have no masters but one, who is Christ, and those whom Christ has made his vicars in the Church and in the State, *unus est magister vester Christus*. – The cursed mouth repeats: Equality! – *Liberté, fraternité, égalité*, old words like the Gospel! As heavenly and sweet as their charm is on the lips of the Lamb and his Church, so perfidious and fatal is it when the Spirit of lies pronounces and explains them.

1 M. Thiers recounts this event as follows: "The generosity aroused in some, the pride engaged in others, led to a sudden disinterestedness; each one rushed to the tribune to abdicate his privileges. The nobility

set the first example; the clergy, no less eager, hastened to follow. A sort of intoxication seized the Assembly: putting aside a superfluous discussion, all orders, all classes, all possessors of prerogatives of any kind, hurried to make their renunciations too. After the deputies of the first orders, those of the communes came in turn to make their offerings. Unable to sacrifice personal privileges, they offered those of the provinces and cities. The response was universal. "(Thiers, *la Révolution*, t. I.) *traire*, when it is inspired only by itself, tolerance, straying into the softness of beliefs or into a false and exaggerated sensitivity, becomes indulgence for errors no less than for people, and inconsiderately excuses everything: acts of weakness and guilty doctrines. The Church had always carefully linked this sentiment to truth. Philosophy in the XVth century detached it from it. It was then that maxims such as "Tolerance is the mother of peace" took hold in society. – Tolerance alone was able to quench the blood that flowed from one end of Europe to the other. – If God had willed it, all men would have the same religion, as they have the same moral instinct: so be tolerant. This system of tolerance, encouraged and propagated, will be the opium, the narcotic that the Revolution needs. It will use it to put all religious quarrels to sleep, and better still, to put religions themselves to sleep, if possible. A whole host of honest people, good people, will want nothing more than to become numb, to doze off and remain neutral, notwithstanding the severity of theology. Third element of the revolutionary brew! And so: Omnipotence of reason, to whose tribunal everything must submit; sufficiency of human forces to make its own way, and sufficiency of social forces to lead peoples (poison); Great words of liberty, equality and fraternity (philtre); Sense of mutual tolerance not only for people, but for doctrines (narcotic); Such is the perfidious beverage which, as in the time of Locust, should cloud reason, and only slowly extinguish life. Some will be intoxicated, others drowsy, many killed in the long run. This mixture will later receive its characteristic name: liberalism.

III

It was, as is well known, the philosophical preparers of the Revolution who undertook the first public trial of this fatal beverage. It did so in relation to the Jewish question.

An important preliminary observation:

Before being transferred to such a public issue as that of the Israelites, the poisons and poppies of the new doctrine were tested privately for a long time and, indeed, in great numbers. The sophists, the progeny of philosophism, had the nasty job of being the henchmen of poisoning, intoxication and madness to the noble people of France.

It's worth pointing out that the philosopher worthy of the name has nothing in common with the sophist: the former seeks to know or make known the truth; the latter seeks only to disfigure or obscure it through false subtlety. The word sophist means, according to Greek etymology, a deceiver in subtle and insidious reasoning. Doesn't this sound like a man who prepares and infiltrates the thoughts of others with subtle poison? Plato, in one of his admirable dialogues, alternately calls the sophist: a hunter of rich young men, a fisherman with a hook, a merchant trading in knowledge for the use of souls, a charlatan. Underneath all this banter, the great moralist reveals a deep irony and a serious sense of purpose; so, when he sets sophistry against true philosophy, the pure love of beauty and goodness against the pursuit of false brilliance and vain appearances, he characterizes and, as it were, engraves in two profound strokes the difference between the philosopher and the sophist: "This one," he says, "tends towards being; this one goes towards nothingness".

How much this judgment of ancient wisdom was justified in the XVth century by the subversive doctrines of intellectual malefactors who became more dangerous under the sun of Christian truth! It has been said of them, linking them to those of Plato's time: "Race of sophists! eternal race, mocking, implacable, who seek error with passion, and for whom the shadow, whatever form it takes, is a

discovery and a felicity. Socrates heard their voices around him as he taught Athenian youth about the existence and unity of God; it was they who poured the hemlock over him as he prophesied to his disciples the immortality of his soul and theirs. Jesus Christ saw them at the foot of his cross, and the Church, heir to all the truths he gave to the world, has never for a single day stopped dragging them after him. It is not

1 Plato, Theaetetus. that they do not counter with progress in the art of doubt and negation. Socrates was their first victim, Jesus Christ was their second; they hope that humankind will be their third, and they are working ardently to achieve this.⁴ " Humanity, their victim!

The human race, their victim! It was this great murder, indeed, that was being prepared and was about to begin in 89. The sophist whose enchanting style most perfidiously distilled the poppies of tolerance, the intoxicating vapor of liberal ideas and the venom of deism, was the famous citizen of Geneva, Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

11 It's fair to say that, alongside the clever sophists, there were some unconscious ones who were to contribute to the poisoning of the beautiful country of France, purely through ignorance, incomplete education and prejudice. Less dangerous at first glance, they become more so because they serve, alas, as intermediaries. History tells us that in some Locust poisonings, two slaves were employed. The first served a beverage that was too hot, but harmless; the lips of the guests could get close to it to better deceive the victim; the other slave, with cold water, poured the poison. In the same way, there will be two kinds of revolutionary beverage: some will dispose people to accept it, others will make them take it.

After this preliminary observation, let's return to the Jewish question:

The trials of liberalism, we said, were

< Lacordaire, Discours sur les études philosophiques. private, in the sense that they did not emanate from a public meeting, an assembly. Pamphlets and pamphlets were its organs; salons and dinners heard its first outpourings, mingled with those of champagne. Fronde des salons, libéralisme des femmes, is the title of a very curious passage in one of Taine's learned works: "Les salons s'ouvrent à la philosophie politique, par suite au Contrat social, à l'Encyclopédie, aux prédications de Rousseau, Mably, d'Holbach, Raynal et Diderot L" - "Un mot redoutable, celui de citoyen, importé par Rousseau, est entré dans le langage ordinaire, et, ce qui est décisif, les femmes s'en adorent comme d'une cocarde." You know how much I am a citizen," writes a young girl to her friend. As a citizen and as a friend, could I receive more pleasant news than that of my dear little one's health and peace^{4 5}?" In all this, there were still only private trials of liberalism. But here came a public test, and it was on the Jewish question that it would be attempted.

The Jews had followed the development of the liberal movement as skilful observers. Carefully avoiding, out of religion as much as prudence, the protection, at least openly, of philosophers who were the declared adversaries of Christianity and Revelation, they had particularly attached themselves to celebrities who bordered on both philosophy and Christianity, such as Malesherbes and Montesquieu. Montesquieu in particular was their man. In a chapter entitled Très humbles remontrances aux inquisiteurs d'Espagne et de Portugal (Very humble admonitions to the inquisitors of Spain and Portugal), the author of { Esprit des lois (The Spirit of Laws) spoke extremely favorably of the Jews, and the authority of his name was invoked by them at every opportunity, in their petitions to Versailles and in the pleadings of their lawyers. They took advantage of Rousseau, but did not rely on him. They relied on Montesquieu. A very fine, albeit non-Christian, critic, comparing Montesquieu and Rousseau, noted these differences: "L'Esprit des lois marqua, dans l'histoire de la pensée humaine, une des grandes dates du XVIII^e siècle. Like the statue of which Bacon speaks, which, without walking itself, indicates the road with its finger, the Esprit des lois posed in all their aspects the political problems whose solution

preoccupied all minds, at least those to whom the future appeared uncertain and covered with dark clouds. It was addressed to men of reason and experience, statesmen and thinkers; by this very fact, it escaped the pull of the crowd, which does not want to be enlightened, but moved. On the contrary, Rousseau, less reserved than Montesquieu, in love with popularity to the point of excess, was not afraid to speak the language of passion in these terrible matters. Rousseau made many disciples; he truly created a school and a party, of which the Declaration of the Rights of Man was the expression and the flag. Montesquieu won only the admiration of wise and cultured minds,

1 A propos d'une juive de dix-huit ans qui avait été brûlée à Lisbonne au dernier autodafé (*Esprit des lois*, xxv, 13.)

and *Y Esprit des lois* remained unknown to the people¹. They understood the sign indicated by the statue's finger. Before taking advantage of the great agitator, Rousseau, they turned their attention to the moderators, Montesquieu and Malesherbes^{6 7}.

Suddenly, the *Mercure de France* newspaper announced this news:

The city of Metz has just put this question up for competition: Are there ways to make Jews MORE USEFUL AND HAPPY IN FRANCE? The competition was initiated by the city's Royal Society of Sciences and Arts.

On the face of it, such a subject was nothing short of peaceful and appropriately liberal. It could only arouse curiosity and sympathy. It produced a certain amount of excitement. "This competition, opened by a very important literary society, had a great impact, and the *Mercure de France* wrote about it in excellent terms ⁸.

But it's far from certain that the leaders and publicists of the French people understood the seriousness of philosophism's attempt to help the Jews. They failed to realize that the opening of this contest was tantamount to the opening of a breach; Metz, despite its citadels, was about to let the Semitic invasion through, and philosophism was the traitor! M. de Bonald rightly wrote in his *Mélanges: Philosophy*, tired of reigning only in literature, took the reins of political government. ... The Jews were the first objects of its philanthropic affections h It's true, the Jews were the first objects of its philanthropic affections: but the eminent publicist is mistaken, as are other writers, in placing the beginning of philosophical sympathies for the Jews at the time of the Constituent Assembly, in 1791: it's in Metz that this beginning should be placed, in 1788.

IV

The choice of Metz was not without significance.

For the Jews of France, this city, like Strasbourg, was associated with the most bitter memories.

In our first volume, we recounted how, for four hundred years, the Jews had been

1 De Bonald. *Mélanges*, I, p. 3C8. had been forced to leave Strasbourg every evening, at the sound of the horn, to seek lodging and sleep elsewhere; and also how, Gerfberr's pride revolting one evening in the face of this custom, the skilful and tenacious Israelite had conquered, in Strasbourg, not only the right of residence, but even that of property. From Strasbourg, then, the idea of becoming property owners had been awakened, communicated and stimulated among Israelites throughout the rest of France.

Another idea was attached to the choice of Metz: that of rehabilitation, reparation – we might almost say revenge, such is the strangeness of the documents!

Indeed, it was in Metz that the execution of Raphaël Lévy, which caused such a stir in France towards the end of the 15th century, took place.

Here's what prompted it; we've borrowed the account from the Archives israéliles:

It was 1669. Raphaël Lévy, born in the village of Chellain- court, four leagues from Metz, lived in Boulay, a village in the Moselle department, then part of the Duchy of Lorraine. He was a poor cattle

merchant, as is still the case in the vicinity of this town; and with this very arduous, not very lucrative trade, he raised a family consisting of his wife, a son and a daughter, already engaged; he had reached the age of 56, without a single complaint being made against him, until the fatal day of September 25, 1669, the eve of the great Feast of Trumpets. On that day, a Wednesday, at 7 a.m., he left Boulay on horseback, accompanied by his son, to go to Metz to buy oil and fetch a ram's horn for the next day's feast. By 3 p.m., he was back at Les Etangs, where he had his horse shod, and by 4 a.m. he was back in Boulay with his son and the local miller. It is well known that on the eve of festivals, Jews return early to avoid violating certain precepts.

On the same day, at 1 o'clock in the evening, a woman named Mangeote Willemin, wife of Gilles Lemoine, wheelwright of the village of Glatigny, was going to a fountain, two hundred paces from the village, to wash some linen; her child, named Didier, aged 3, was walking behind her; Apparently, she paid no attention, and the child ran down the road and into the Haycz forest, where he lost his way. As it was approaching winter, he was probably devoured by wolves, and indeed, on the following November 26, four pigs found a badly disfigured child's head with a shirt collar in the forest.

The mother, having turned around and no longer seen her son, ran to warn her husband. of the child's footsteps on the road; but, instead of crossing the road and entering the wood, the father had the unfortunate idea that the child had taken the road to Metz, and he headed for that town; Having met a cavalryman from the Count de Vaudemont's company and asked him about the child, the cavalryman said he had found a Jew with a large black beard riding a white horse, carrying a child in front of him, and that when he met him he had moved away from the main road within pistol range. The father ran to Metz as far as the Porte des Allemands. There, he was told that Lévy de Boulay had been seen entering the city, and that he usually stayed in rue des Juifs, with his relative Garçon. He went to this street and asked for his child; they told him they didn't know what he meant. Eight days later, on October 30, the father lodged a complaint with the criminal lieutenant of the Metz bailiwick.

The trial proved that the child had not been eaten by wolves. The Parliament of Metz concluded that the child had been kidnapped, and that Ilaphaël Lévy had committed a crime; he was condemned to be shackled alive, and the sentence was carried out on January 17, 1670. Let's continue with the Archmes: On Friday morning, January 17, the sentence was read to him; he was taken from his cell to the torture chamber, where he told the commissioners to write down the following: That anything he might say, any confession that the pain of torture might wring from him, is a lie; for he is innocent, and all Israel is innocent; that he was not accusing his judges, but the witnesses. On this, the holy and pious man endured all the tortures without deviating from truth and justice from beginning to end, and the most acute pains could not persuade him to confess this lie by the weakest word; he persisted in the truth, saying that he, as well as all Israel, was innocent. As he was about to lose his soul through the great suffering, they tried to make him drink wine to strengthen him, but he refused, because it was not according to the Hebrew rites; then they took him out of the torture and led him to a room, where they made him sit before the fire to warm him up: several people then came to urge him to speak, but he would not lend an ear to anyone, and he desired that Israelites be sent to him. This request was granted, so Seligman, the trustee, and Rabbi Zenville went to find him and console him; he recommended his wife and children to them, then wept, prayed and put on his phylacteries. At 2 p.m., he was removed from his prison and taken to the metropolitan church to ask forgiveness; but he would neither take the candle nor ask forgiveness, for, he said, he neither wanted nor should ask forgiveness for a crime he had not committed; From there he was taken to Fournirue, where a carriage was waiting to seat him; he said that, as God had given him the strength to endure such suffering, He would continue to give him strength to sanctify His holy name and go to the place of the pyre. Many came to urge him to confess, but he rebuffed them, saying: "Don't you see heaven open and two angels ready to receive my soul?"

Several Christians testify to having heard these words come out of his mouth¹.

He then walked to Champ-à-Seille, where the pyre was set alight, and the sentence was read to him, warning him to reflect and confess; but he remained faithful to the truth, protesting his innocence. He approached the pyre which had been prepared for him; the executioner then covered his face with straw so as not to see the fire, but he removed it from his face, and in less than a quarter of an hour his body was burnt and annihilated⁹.

The Archives Israélites follow the story with the following comment: "If this man had belonged to the Christian communion, the Chateaubriands and Lamartines would have sung of his death; but a poor Jew, a cattle merchant, who cares?"²

Don't be fooled, Archives Israélites, the cattle merchant found something better than Eudore's cantor in the Martyrs: Metz itself, after condemning and burning him, took up the cause of its people. However, impartiality leads us to say: Here again is the effect of the beverage! for a century later (1670-1788), Metz was turned around; here is the proof, in this admission about the contest opened in favor of the Jews:

"The initiative taken by the Literary Society of Metz was of great importance. It was a role that belonged to the city of Metz, a liberal city par excellence, which for several centuries had had a model Jewish community in its midst, and which, having resisted persecution against the Protestants, had on the contrary, and on several occasions, aldermen of the Reformed religion. It was also up to the liberal men who made up the Royal Society of Sciences and Arts, and who were in frequent contact with the country's Jews, to bring public opinion back from the age-old error into which it had fallen concerning the Jews, and to seek ways of making them more useful to the country and happier themselves, by freeing them from the reprobation that was being heaped upon them h".

For us, we can only reason as follows:

If Raphaël Lévy was innocent, Providence, which is all-powerful, would console the poor cattle merchant's ashes with the first signal of reparation to his people;

If he had been guilty, Jewish audacity was frightening, as it challenged Christian society to emancipate itself from the place of the crime and the stake that had punished it.

V

"To seek ways of making Israelites more useful and happier in France" was the aim of the Metz competition. The initiative came from the city's Royal Society of Sciences and Arts.

The competition was announced in 1783.

Competitors had two years to send in their briefs, until the tin of 1787.

In fact, seven briefs were sent in.

The commission examining them selected two; but, instead of awarding the prizes, it urged the authors to

¹ L'Emancipation des juifs devant la Société royale des sciences et arts de Metz en 1787 et M. Rœderer, by Abraham Caiien. (Revue des études juives, n° 1, p. 84.) to improve them, and, extending the duration of the competition, postponed its new sanction until Tannée 1788. There seems to be nothing very inolfensive about all this. The Société royale des sciences et des arts even seems to deserve praise for provoking this competition and extending its duration. Here, however, are the dangers lurking in the background.

The project to improve the lot of the Israelites had entered deeply into the heart of the generous Louis XVI. As early as January 1784, more than a year before the first resounding announcement of the Metz competition, the king had issued an edict abolishing the corporal tolls to which the Jews were subjected. Then, from Versailles, came the Letters Patent of 1784, which resolved the critical situation of the Jews of Alsace by easing it. Finally, the monarch had put the question of emancipating the Israelites under

study, and entrusted it to Malesherbes, who was working on it with a commission from the Council of State; an edict was being prepared under the eyes of the king, in which "Christian prudence would be combined with royal benevolence¹". Just then, the second noisy announcement came from Metz: the competition had been extended. Strange. Why the extension^{10 11}? Why maintain an independent center of study and ideas in Metz, when the issue was being seriously studied in Versailles? Is it not to discuss and control the royal edict? And if events were to come to a head, would it not be to remove the question from the hands of the monarchy? First danger of this contest.

The second, and even more serious, danger is that philosophers will preside over the competition and award the prizes. In Versailles, the direction that the Crown is giving to the study of the question is Christian, and Malesherbes, philosopher that he is, would not dare to introduce, under the eyes of the King and Queen, anything contrary to the interests of the Church and the kingdom. But in Metz, in the midst of the Jewish community, the question is slipping under the Hebraic influence that cannot fail to steer it surreptitiously. All the members of the commission who read the reports sent in and award the prizes are philosophers. They should judge impartially, but they themselves poison the issue with liberal ideas. What could be more pernicious than the words of the president, M. Le Payen, at the solemn session of August 25, 1788, for the distribution of prizes:

found that none of these works met the expectations of the Royal Society of Metz.

"On his report, the Royal Society left the competition open until until 1788, especially urging the two authors whose memoirs had struck it to enter the competition again." (*Revue des études Juives*, n° 1, pages 85, 90, 93.) Isn't it childish, but at the same time significant, to see two competitors urged by the Commission to re-enter the competition, because their memoirs are not yet sufficiently in line with the desired solution?

1 Did Malesherbes disapprove of this provoked and prolonged competition in Metz? The documents are silent. All that is known is that he was on friendly terms with Count Rœderer, who was passionate about the contest in favor of the Jews.

"It was not without great satisfaction that the Royal Society noted that the three works it crowned, founded on the same principles, supported by the same facts, tending towards the same goal and by more or less the same means, had as authors people over whom the difference of state, of homeland and probably of religion, did not stop V action of the eternal truths of nature and reason. In general, all the memoirs we have received, give or take one or two, accuse our prejudices against the Jews of being the primary cause of their vices, and in particular of the one that revolts us the most (usury). We reduce them to the impossibility of being honest; how can we expect them to be? Let's be fair to them, so that they become fair to us. This is the wish of humanity and of all reasonable people; everything leads us to believe that the government has taken it on board, and will not delay in fulfilling it¹." Such language was a betrayal of F Eglise and of France; it accused the Jews less than the Christians. This president, perpetual secretary of the Royal Society of Sciences and Arts, justified his name: M. Le Payen.

Three of the nine memoirs submitted to the Commission were deemed worthy of the award. The winning authors were: Messrs Grégoire, parish priest at Einbarménil, near Lunéville; Thiéry, lawyer at the Nancy Parliament; and Zalkind-Houritz, a Polish Jew living in Paris.

No honorable mention was given to any of them.

1 Affiches des Évêchés et Lorraine, year 1788, n° 35, p. 275, col. 4 - *Revue des études juives*, n° 1, p. 104.

The author, a Benedictine monk from Saint-Avold and former parish priest of Gharleville, Dom Chais, stated that: "As the Jews are birds of prey, we must, without wishing to kill them, cut off their beaks and talons"; and to make them useful, the author saw nothing better, at the time, than to employ them "to make honey and wax all over the kingdom, given their decided taste for these substances". More

than one reader will be tempted to agree, a century on, that if the naïve Benedictine had been listened to and crowned, the job of emptying the hives would perhaps have prevented the state coffers from being emptied, and that this Ruth-like job would have saved the public treasury from a Pharaoh-like shipwreck!...

VI

The Revolution is a thief, a judgment we justified in our first volume*. It was bound to take violently, but it was also bound to steal surreptitiously. This second method of theft was inaugurated in Metz. There, the Revolution surreptitiously appropriated the question of improving the lot of the Jews, which the Crown had thought up and initiated at Versailles, and whose solution, full of prudence, was to figure among its priorities.

1 L'Entrée des Israélites, livre IV, cliap. vi. titles of honor in the eyes of history. In Metz, the larceny began, to be completed and legitimized before F Assemblée constituante.

Until then, one man had been in charge: Malesherbes. The king had appointed him, and the Jews surrounded him with their obsequiousness. But the Revolution pushed another man forward, Abbé Grégoire, priest of Em- berménil. He was the main prizewinner in the Metz competition, for his Essay on the physical, moral and political regeneration of the Jews. Good Malesherbes, you've gone to a lot of trouble on behalf of the Hebrews! They're leaving you, they're going to surround the parish priest of Emberménil from now on and become attached to him, but, alas! as

Tî/i .

rust to a Temple utensil.

In the major crises that have shaken Christian society, the Spirit of Darkness has always used a prgtie. Evil, then, enters more deeply, because the corruption of the best becomes the worst, and the divine ferment, of which the fallen priest was the depository, acquires a terrible efficacy in its return against God. The priest Arius served for Arianism; the bishop Photius, for Greek schism; the monk Luther, for Protestantism; the priest Gregory, for Jewish preponderance. When they appear, the glow of the priesthood that enhances their respective natural qualities points them out to the crowd, and soon, with the coal stolen from the censer, the fire is lit! "Some names have left behind them, on the waves of time, a dazzling trace and cast a great lustre on history. But don't let that seduce you! Look carefully: their splendors are the splendors of fire; their fires, the fires of lightning and thunder. It looks like the sinister flame projected into the distance by a vast heap of impure matter suddenly ablaze; it is not the soft, pure light so harmoniously spread across the vaults of heaven by the sovereign brush of the sovereign artist G" Such will be the brilliance of the priest Grégoire, parish priest of Einberménil, in the Jewish question, a brilliance that will have nothing either of the discreet brightness of the sanctuary lamp! He made his debut at the Metz competition, where he was the most highly praised winner. As we shall see more of his face, words and deeds in the course of this book, we will confine ourselves here to quoting the peroration of his dissertation presented at the Metz competition:

"A new century is about to dawn: may the palms of IIumanity adorn its frontispiece, and may posterity applaud the reunion of your hearts. The Jews are members of this universal family which must establish brotherhood between all peoples; and over them, as over you, Revelation extends its majestic veil. Children of the same father, remove all pretext for the aversion of your brothers, who will one day be reunited in the same fold; open to them asylums where they can quietly rest their heads and dry their tears; and may the Jew, granting the Christian a return of tenderness, embrace in me his fellow citizen and his friend 12 13."

What could be more reassuring, more enchanting even, than this portico adorned with palms that Gregory announces and celebrates? The misfortune is that at its base there is an abyss, a dreadful void. Let's take a look at this abyss and explore its depths.

CHAPTER II

CHRIST REJECTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- 1789 -

I. Name given in the Scriptures to God's Adversary: the serpent helm or lever^f^This name is strikingly realized in 1789. - II. The gloomy absence of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, despite all the apologies we've tried to make for it: the cornerstone of the social order, Christ, has been rejected. - III. It is historically certain that the legislators of '89 wanted to get rid of Christ as the cornerstone. - IV. The darkness of this rejection of Christ. A poignant contrast between the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Salic Law, one the constitution of France in its mature age, the other the constitution of France in its infancy. -V. The destinies of the cornerstone and the destinies of official France separate. - VI. What this separation will mean for France.

I

At the head of such a chapter, the name of Satan must be pronounced in defense of the French nation. He is the great architect of revolutions, and in this, he justifies his name of Satan, l'adversaire! for such is the meaning, in Hebrew, of this cursed name. An adversary of God, he is also, in humanity, an adversary of the evolution of truth, goodness and beauty. He counteracts evolutions with revolutions.

Rarely an adversary, he stands upright, rarely facing us, because he has felt - and not forgotten - the arm of the Almighty, but oblique, diverted, sinuous, in the manner of the serpent, whose figure he has borrowed and whose walk he has degraded in earthly paradise.

If we meditate carefully on the different phases of evil in the history of the world, we will easily recognize the sinuous traces of the adversary who crawls, spies and takes advantage. At the time of Mohammed, he used the Bible and the name of Abraham to detach the East from Christ. In Luther's time, he took advantage of the universal need for reformation to take half the West away from the Church through the Reformation. His path was almost always tortuous and circuitous. But with the French Revolution, it changed. The Adversary's attitude changed. He no longer came to fight obliquely, but head-on!

So, in the gigantic struggle he's about to engage in, a new characteristic name suits him. Again, the Bible contains it. The Adversary still appears as a serpent, but with the strange and terrible qualification given to it by Isaiah: the serpent bars, the serpent leicr L

What energy in this figure!

We know how powerful a lever is for shaking and lifting.

So when did Satan show himself as a lever?

1 Serpentera vectern, Isaiah, chap. xxvii < p7*" }"! - In 1789, when society, moved by an unusual and infernal force, suddenly felt itself lifted up against God, but lifted up to a height of pride that had never been seen, with the Rights of Man supplanting the Rights of God!

Archimedes used to say: "Let someone give me a fulcrum, and with the lever I will lift the earth." What the geometer couldn't do, Satan has. In 1789, the Adversary finally found a point of support, long sought after, long prepared, in the superb and solitary reason of man, this reason emancipated from faith; and, insinuating himself there, applying himself there, he forms the lever: society is then stirred and shaken to its very foundations.

Indeed, only he is strong enough to ensure that, in the shaking of the entire social edifice, the Revolution, which means reversal, overturning, reaches its plenitude this time: putting on top what, according to eternal laws, should be on the bottom, and on the bottom what had been placed on top. To achieve such a result, the serpent-lever's first effort is to lift the ancient cornerstone placed by Clovis at the roots of French society - Christ who loves the Franks - out of its place, and replace it with another foundation. This is the emptiness, the chasm that is opening up beneath the pompous social

portico, sung by Gregory about the Jews: "A new century is about to open, may the palms of Humanity adorn its frontispiece 14!"

Now is the time, or never, to plumb the void, the abyss, beneath the portico that bears the palms of Humanity on its frontispiece.

II

This portico, announced by Grégoire, did not remain imaginary. The National Assembly raised it and gave it a name: the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

Here is its pompous frontispiece or preamble:

"The representatives of the French people, constituted as the National Assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt for human rights are the sole causes of public misfortune and government corruption, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man, so that this declaration, constantly present to all members of the social body, will constantly remind them of their rights and duties; so that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power, being able to be compared at every moment with the goal of any political institution, are more respected; so that the claims of the citizens, based henceforth on simple and incontestable principles, always turn to the maintenance of the constitution and the happiness of all.

"Consequently, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen..."

However indulgent the interpretation given to this preamble to the Declaration may be, and notwithstanding all the apologies that have been attempted, a gloomy absence shines through, a chilling emptiness: Christ is not named.

Passed over in silence, he is rejected. It's equivalent! For to remain silent about Christ, when we owe him everything, is to deny him;

Not to name him, when it is a question, as the preamble states, of the most serious determination for society, of a new order of things which must ensure the happiness of the human race, is to commit a radiation, an apostasy;

Silence that is all the more mournful and formidable in its consequences, because it comes from the great assembly of the French nation, and from an assembly composed as it was in 1789.

Indeed, how was it composed?

By virtue of their education, birth, social position and enlightenment, the members of the Estates General are the elite of the nation. They include bishops, priests and eminent religious figures and they are all Catholics. Raised in Christian houses, they have been taught exclusively by Jesuits, Oratorians, Sulpicians, Benedictines, Barnabites and secular priests, renowned for their knowledge and respected for their virtues. In short, they are the legislators of a Christian people.

It is therefore natural to think that they will be inspired by the social doctrines of the Gospel, and that they will pass on in their work, if not the text, at least the spirit of this divine code; that they will seek the principal bases of the new order of things in the ancient traditions of the monarchy of Clovis, Charlemagne and Saint Louis; that they will carefully examine the charters and institutions of the Catholic states of Europe; in a word, that the monuments and legislators of the Christian centuries will be their oracles, so as to make the wisdom of the fathers serve the advantage of the children.

The opposite is true.

The Assembly, or rather the Revolution it personifies, is splitting the life of French society in two, by repudiating the Christian past, and, to make it clear that it is no longer inspired by this past, it is silent about Christ:

Silence on him, in the preamble to the Declaration;

Silence on him in the articles;

Silence on him during the months-long discussion. Not once are the names of Jesus Christ, of the Gospel, of Christianity, on the lips of these legislators, during the discussion of human rights. Such prolonged silence is mournful: it's the only way to keep quiet about the dead! The new social edifice is being built with the clear repudiation of the old cornerstone. The foundations of French society are being shaken and reshaped. Man replaces Man-God. It is no longer the God-man who forms the new social foundation, but man. The humanitarian society is proclaimed.

Let's take a guess:

If, back in time, by divine permission, Saint Paul had entered the National Assembly, what would he have thought of the Declaration of the Rights of Man? St. Paul was rightly called the Apostle to the nations, because, spending himself for them, he led them from idolatry to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. When he entered the midst of the Areopagus of Athens, he borrowed the beginning of his harangue from this famous inscription he had encountered on his way: To the Unknown God*. Had he been in the midst of the French nation's Estates General, he would have been sure to drop this sad comment on the Declaration of the Rights of Man: "To the misunderstood God!

The great Apostle, in the course of his apostolate, had laid down this rule of conduct for the nations with regard to Christ: Let him come first in all things^{15 16}. But here, not only has Christ fallen from first place, he no longer ranks, he no longer counts¹⁷.

III

It has been said of the National Assembly, to explain and mitigate its fault, that it confined itself to avoiding the name of Christ in the Constitution, without any hostile bias.

Avoiding Christ, especially when you're the French nation: what an excuse!

The serpent was very clever, and inspired us to proceed by elimination. Eliminated from the law, the name of Christ will soon be eliminated from morals. Don't laws create morals? The day will come when the nation that was once France will no longer have the courage to publicly pronounce the name of Jesus Christ. In parliaments, it will be a miracle when a deputy utters it: people on the left will snigger, and many on the right will lower their heads. In other public gatherings, when the Divinity is named, people will agree to say God, but will carefully avoid the name Jesus Christ. And finally, even within Christian families and among Christians, the pronounciation of this august name will become timid and rare. Silence from

would be more than an infidelity to the lays of the Gospel, taught by her to the univ'ers, and that the simple practice of the Decalogue, of which she is the custodian, would be the advent of the dreamed-of golden age?... No! this insulting silence is not oblivion: it's exile! Voltaire spent thirty years hurling the blasphemy against Christ that my mouth refuses to repeat; Rousseau, beating all cults to the ground, proclaimed the native goodness and independence of nature: and the pen of the Constituante is held by the disciples of these two apostates. The exile of the Chj'ist of the rights of man, is dope the apostasy! "weakness which will have had for principle, and which will allege for justification, the silence of the national Assamblée. The legislators of '89 laid the cornerstone of the scandal. No, they were not allowed to pass over in silence the One whom the heavens adore and who has formed in space the harmonious concert of Christian nations, and in the midst of them the French nation!

"They confined themselves to avoiding His name without any hostile bias," it has been said, lending them the attitude of those pitiful men who, out of a residue of reverential fear, avoid encountering a sanctuary they would not wish to enter. Would to God that this had been the thinking and the motive for the silence of the 89 legislators! But, alas, it was not so. On the contrary, it is historically certain that they wanted to get rid of Christ as the cornerstone of the new society they were founding.

Three things superabundantly prove this:

A. Firstly, the goal they were pursuing.

Indeed, what did they want?

To rebuild society from top to bottom, using Rousseau's Social Contract as their catechism, which they applied point by point, read taken, as the type of citizen they wanted to form, the abstract man, isolated from Christian civilization, that Rousseau portrays, i.e. the man without Revelation, the man of nature. This is their type, as they put it: "When we wanted to imagine the founding of a human society, we vaguely imagined a half-bucolic, half-theatrical scene, much like that seen on the frontispieces of illustrated books on morality and politics. Half-naked men, or men dressed in animal skins, are gathered under a great oak tree; in their midst a venerable old man rises and speaks to them in the language of nature and reason; he proposes that they unite and explains to them what they are obliging themselves to by this mutual commitment; he shows them the harmony of public and private interest and ends by making them feel the beauties of virtue. Everyone immediately shouts with joy, embraces him, rushes around him and chooses him as their magistrate; on all sides they dance under the elm trees, and happiness is now established on earth. - I'm not exaggerating. The National Assembly's addresses to the nation will be haran - gués of this style. For years to come, the government will speak to the people like a Gessner shepherd*." Thus, it was no longer the Christian who was to be the object of the solicitude of the 89 legislators, but the man of nature, the man before and without Revelation.

The truth is,

Was there, decently, any room left for Christ in an enterprise that made such a clean sweep of Christianity?

So they deliberately eliminated Christ. No longer taking into account the fact that the French are Christians, they necessarily removed the divine Master of Christians from the French Constitution.

Disdaining, for their building, Xespierres vivantes, they have,

i Taine, l'A ncien Régime, p. 310-311. a fortiori, rejected the Cornerstone. Some did so with premeditation, others out of cowardly complacency. Rousseau's influence fascinated almost all of them. B. The leaders and a significant part of the Assembly publicly revealed and ratified their hostility to the living God. It had been decided that the enumeration of Human Rights would be preceded by a preamble or frontispiece which, by its solemn terms, would impose respect on future generations. You can read it again in § II of this chapter. However, when the Assembly decided on the terms, not only was there no mention of Christ, but the most violent storms erupted when some deputies wanted to link this preamble, this frontispiece, to the notion of the Divinity as to a tutelary goddess.

The newspapers of the time recorded these stormy sessions. Here is a faithful summary:

Impiety, disguised under the name of philosophism, proposes to inscribe in the preamble that man derives his rights from nature. M. le comte de Virieu observes forcefully: "Eh! what is nature? What idea does it present? It's an empty word, which robs us of the idea of the Creator, to consider only matter.

Supporting AL de Virieu, Lally-Tollendal asks "that we don't forget the Supreme Being".

Unfortunately, this name "Supreme Being" expressed only the minimum of Divinity; nevertheless, when this minimum of Divinity was repeatedly requested from the Assembly, the tumult of the opponents and the tribunes drowned out the voice of the speakers, and the bias of not hearing was most evident.

This was especially true during the last sessions:

The Bishop of Clermont had stated that the principles of the French Constitution should rest on religion as on an eternal foundation;

This time, Mirabeau took the trouble to reply. This time, Mirabeau took the trouble to reply, in a disdainful and sometimes ironic tone: "We have," he said, "only to concern ourselves with the things of this world... Let us allow freedom of worship, let us say no more, and let us sleep in peace".

The discussion resumed another day; Maillet and the Comte de Clermont-Lodève insisted that the necessity of religion should be affirmed and respect for everyone's religion proclaimed as a right; but Talleyrand replied that "we will deal with that in the Constitution, but the place for such affirmations is not in the Declaration". This dismissive repartee is greeted with loud approval. The discussion cannot continue. An obviously calculated disorder prevents contradictions from arising. The uproar is such that the chairman twice offers his resignation L

Finally, this minimum of Divinity, conceived in these terms: "In the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being", managed to pass, because it excluded recognition of the living God of Revelation. Like a ferocious dog that is still restrained, revolutionary impiety gruntingly consented to allow the writing of "In the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being".

1 Roux et BvcüEi,flit.parl<si>i. d? la lié vol., I. H,séances d'aoûl(t "89).

in the preamble the vague statement of T Etre suprême "expressly reduced to the role of a witness without authority, whose presence hardly embarrasses the Assembly, qm salutes him for the form by giving him leave E ".

C. Is there any need to cite the articles of the Declaration that follow on from the preamble and form the principles of 89 2 as the final proof that Christ was firmly excluded from the minds of the legislators? An unsuspecting historian had the courage to say: "These are so many daggers aimed at society: it will suffice to push the handle to bring in the blade³". The legislators of '89 have tapered the blade, the clubs and the

1 Dix Ans de l'histoire du droit. 1789- 17C9, by Lucien Brun, p. 17-18.

2 The articles of the Declaration can be divided into two categories, according to M. Lu< ien Brun's very apt classification.

"The first contains vulgar maxims of universal justice that are absolutely indisputable. Thus: social distinctions can only be based on common futility; the law only has the right to defend actions harmful to society; anything not forbidden by the law cannot be prevented, and no one can be forced to do what the law does not order; the law is the same for all; all citizens are eligible for all jobs, and there are no grounds for preference between them other than the degree of their ability to fill them; property is an inviolable and sacred right, and so on.

"None of this is subject to contradiction. One is only astonished that the legislators of '89 should have believed that they were revealing unknown truths to the world, by proclaiming with such pomp and circumstance axioms of natural law, from which they should, no doubt, draw inspiration to bring about the necessary reforms, but which, before them, were not ignored even by governments which had disregarded them in practice.

"The second category contains the celebrated articles that more specifically form the principles of '89. Three ideas emerge from their various formulations: 1° no one is obliged to obey laws to which he has not consented; 2° legitimate power lies in numbers; 3° all men are born and remain equal. These, according to this exact summary, are the principles of 89. The first denies authority, the second denies liberty and the third denies justice. Dix Ans de l'histoire du droit, 1789-1799, by Lucien Brun, p. 24-5. The hordes of '93 will push the handle. Let's be the judge:

APPLICATIONS IN 93

"We are oppressed, let us resist and rise up in arms".

"Let's go to the Hôtel de Ville, let's question our lukewarm or suspicious magistrates, let's monitor their sessions, let's check whether they are pursuing the priests and disarming the aristocrats; let's prevent them from plotting against the people, and let's make these bad clerks work."

"Therefore, let no one be excluded from the national guard; let everyone, even the destitute, have a weapon, pike or rifle, to defend their liberty.

"Hereditary kingship is therefore illegitimate: let's go to the Tuileries and throw down the throne.

"Listen to these clamors from the public square, these petitions arriving from all the towns: here is the general will which is the living law and which abolishes the written law. As such, the leaders of a few clubs in Paris will depose the King and violate the Legislative Assembly. In other words, the noisy, factious minority will supplant the sovereign nation, and from now on it will lack nothing to do as it pleases and when it pleases.

Isn't the link between the principles of '89 and their application in '93 obvious? It could not be otherwise. "On the still-bloody ruins of the Bastille was the hearth of the patriotic flame that was soon to ignite and regenerate the nation. It was no longer Paris, but a new city and a new people... Young people flocked from the guardhouses to the districts, practicing in these popular assemblies to discuss and support the rights of men¹⁸. Less than three years later, a large number of those who had collaborated or applauded the drafting of the Principles of 89, or Rights of Man, were able to reread their Declaration posted on the guillotine posts and meditate, as they climbed the steps they were never to descend again, on the wisdom of their forecasts and the effectiveness of their work for "the happiness of all". This is what the Declaration of the Rights of Man had in store for us, and even then, these are only its most immediate consequences; later consequences, no less pernicious, remain shrouded in it, awaiting their turn to blossom.

One wonders, not without some surprise, when one reads in the *Moniteur* the minutes of the sessions devoted to the famous Declaration, how it could be that, out of 290 ecclesiastics who were members of F Assemblée nationale, not one proposed replacing the vague denomination of the Supreme Being with the clear name of Jesus Christ. One is almost tempted to blame the clergy of the time for this silence. But astonishment ceases when we take the trouble to deduce, as we have tried to do, what was contained in the dreaded premises. A painful presentiment must have given all these priests a glimpse of what was to come from the Declaration, notwithstanding the misguidance of a few. Now, to bring the name of Jesus Christ to such a work, would it not have been to put the head of Christ on the body of Belial? This is obviously why the clergy who were part of the Assembly refrained from claiming the name of their divine Master: they acted wisely.

A vicious circle, a terrible circle! The deliberate plan to dispense with Christ as the cornerstone read to elaborate such articles, to conceal these perfidious daggers; and when once the articles were drafted, they could no longer decently bear the pure, radiant and tutelary name of the Savior of the world.

IV

11 It is therefore historically certain that, when it came to laying the foundations of the new society, Christ was positively eliminated as the cornerstone: he was dispensed with premeditatedly.

At the beginning of this chapter, we stated our conviction that only God's adversary, Satan, had been capable of overturning the foundations of the French nation in this way. In striving to place the primary responsibility for such a radical and lamentable upheaval on the infernal serpent, we cannot, however, conceal and veil the blackness on France's coat of arms, a blackness which, moreover, the understanding of the historical facts which follow presupposes. To our great regret, we must point it out.

Well, yes, France, hitherto so noble, so grateful, so tender, has begun this black stain, this blackness which will extend to the coats of arms of other nations and which is called ingratitude.

Blackness! because since the Sanhedrin (that great assembly of Jerusalem which, with Caiaphas at its head, had rejected Christ) no other national assembly had repeated this fault; and it was an assembly of France which took up the blindness and ingratitude of the Sanhedrin!

Blackness! because, when Christ had come down to earth, having found the nations groaning in slavery and sitting in the shadows of death, he had, at the price of his blood, delivered them, redeemed them, led them to the light; he had, truly, acquired them: they had become, as the apostle Saint Peter

admirably expresses it, the people of Vacquisition*. Now, wasn't it ingratitude to oppose Christ's right to liberate and own them with the rights of man, and to use the pretext of human rights to get rid of Christ?

Blackness! Bitch that, if France had become France, wasn't it to Christ that it owed it? Don't

1 First Epistle of St. Peter, no. 9. had He not chosen it from among all the nations, as a ploughman chooses a delectable vine? Did he not delight in making her his most beautiful kingdom, after that of heaven? Had he not granted her a succession of kings similar to that which had prepared his birth in Judea? At the foot of his throne, did Charlemagne not give David his hand? Had he not entrusted the care of his Church to her, as he had entrusted the care of his mother to St. John? On her, finally, had he not fixed the eyes of the rest of the world, so that they would admire her, imitate her and follow her? And it was she who gave the world the signai of Christ's rejects!

We felt an indescribable tug at our hearts as we undertook the parallel we're about to read, which has yet to be drawn. May this heartbreak be passed on, as we read the parallel!

France has given itself two famous constitutions, among all those that have peppered the phases of its history: the Salic Law and the Declaration of the Rights of Man; one, the charter of its childhood; the other, the charter of its mature age. Let's compare them.

PREAMBLE TO THE SALIC LAW¹⁹

The nation of the Franks, illustrious, having God as its founder, strong under arms, firm in peace treaties, profound in counsel, noble and sound of body, of singular whiteness and beauty, bold, agile and tough in battle, since converted to the Catholic faith, free of heresy; it was still under a barbaric belief, but with God's inspiration it sought-

the key to science, according to the nature of its qualities, desiring justice, guarding piety; then the Salic law was dictated by the chiefs of this nation who, at that time, commanded it.

Four men were chosen from among many: the gast¹ of AVise, the gast of Bode, the gast of Sale and the gast of Winde, in the places called canton de Wise, canton de Sale, canton de Bode and canton de Winde. These men met in three mâls^{20 21}, carefully discussed all the causes of trial, dealt with each one in particular and decreed their judgment in the following manner. Then, when, with God's help, Chlod- vigh the hairy, the handsome, the illustrious king of the Franks, had first received Catholic baptism, all that in this pact was deemed unsuitable was amended with clarity by the illustrious kings Ghlodwigh, Ghildeber and Ghlotcr, and thus was drawn up this decree:

"T^{7v}<? Christ, who loves the Franks! May he guard their kingdom and fill their leaders with the light of his grace! May he protect the army, grant them signs that attest to their faith, joy, peace, felicity! May the Lord Jesus Christ direct those who govern in the path of piety! For this nation is the one which, small in number but brave and strong, shook off the hard yoke of the Romans, and which, after recognizing the sanctity of baptism, lavishly adorned with gold and precious stones the bodies of the holy martyrs whom the Romans had consumed by fire, mutilated by iron, or had torn apart by beasts."

Following this preamble, which has a warlike vivacity, the Salic Law is set out in 408 articles. This law of the early Franks was above all a penal code^{22 23}. Of the 408 articles, 343 are devoted to judicial penalties, of which 77 provide for and punish the theft of animals, as follows: 19, the theft of pigs; 17, the theft of horses; 14, the theft of bulls, oxen or cows; 6, the theft of sheep or goats; 5, the theft of dogs; 9, the theft of birds; 7, the theft of bees. The law goes into the most minute detail for each of these offences, and 113 articles are devoted to violence against persons, 20 of which cover all types of mutilation, 24 of which cover outrages against women, and so on. So it's true to say that violence and theft, that is, attacks on people and things, are the main concern of the Salic Law. Admittedly, it is an indigestible heap, revealing on every page both the barbarity of a people in which acts of violence are frequent, and the crudeness of a legislator who, lacking the ability to generalize, formulates a new

provision for each case he encounters. But in any case, security of life and security of property are the two principles around which all the articles of this primordial legislation of the Frankish people, still agrarian and catechumenal, unfold.

Let us now turn to the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

PREAMBLE

The representatives of the French people, constituted as a National Assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt for human rights are the sole causes of public misfortune and governmental corruption, have resolved to set forth, in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man, so that this declaration, constantly present to all members of the social body, may constantly remind them of their rights and duties; so that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power, which can be compared at any moment with the aim of any political institution, are more respected; so that the claims of the citizens, based henceforth on simple and indisputable principles, always turn to the maintenance of the Constitution and the happiness of all.

Consequently, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of VEtre suprême, the following rights of man and citizen.

Following this preamble, in which the vague and hollow expressions "In the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being" have replaced the all-warlike vivacity of the cry "Long live Christ cpri loves the Franks", the Declaration enumerates in 17 articles the various human rights or principles of '89 (mentioned above p. 43-44). The Salic Law was criticized for failing to generalize; the Declaration of the Rights of Man has the opposite shortcoming; its articles are abstract formulas; "the Social Contract, from which they are drawn, has the authority of geometry; the National Assembly has built politics on the model of mathematics²⁴".

These are the two fundamental Constitutions of the French people, when they were young and when they reached full maturity.

Well, we have no hesitation in saying that the child people were better inspired than the mature people. Its first Constitution, though shapeless, is a page of love, with Christ at its head; its second Constitution, though learned and philosophical, is a page of oblivion, with Christ gone. From the first, an ardent and loyal people will emerge; from the second, an oblique and unrecognizable people. The first is a sap, the second, a volcano; one prepares the beehive to which the beautiful kingdom of France has been compared, the other prepares the whole Revolution and its rubble. When we read the first, we feel no apprehension, we even smell a perfume of security exhaling from it; scs articles on the theft of pigs, the theft of oxen, the theft of bees, etc., at the same time as they are naive, are precise, clean; if the defect of synthesis is met there, the spirit is satisfied with these cases of offences well presented: the thieves will not be spared. But when you read the second, you're secretly terrified by these abstract, geometrically-formed articles, you'd think they were caves: the result will be crimes and legal theft; it will rightly be said that the Revolution is theft.

Let's imagine the founder of the French nation, the old hairy king, so irritated one day about the Soissois vase, suddenly reappearing in the middle of the National Assembly of 1789: what a formidable blow from his francisque would he not have unloaded on the Declaration of the Rights of Man, a vase of misery and shame!

V

The great French Assembly has thus laid the foundations of a new society without the Ghri-.t. What is to become of Christ, seen as a cornerstone that has been discarded, and of official France, which no longer has him in its fundamental constitution?

First, Christ.

He is the cornerstone, the corner stone. We have referred to him several times in this famous phrase.

Now is the time to explain it.

A brief architectural overview is in order: what is the cornerstone in an edifice, in a construction?

The corner of a house is formed, as can be seen at every step, by the junction of two walls. By meeting one another, two walls form an angle: you only have to look to understand. In this angle, the cornerstone is the solid ashlar which, laid and buried in the ground, supports the two walls on itself, allowing them to join, to reunite. Thanks to it, the two walls, the right and the left, meet, unite and persist in their union. This is the role of the cornerstone. As we can see, it's a role of reunion.

Applied to Jesus Christ, this locution meant that, since he was the Messiah, his role must have been to bring together and unite what was divided, what was distant, either from God to man, or from man to man. And indeed, did not Jesus Christ truly appear, in the imposing series of eighteen centuries, as the angle of love that had brought everything together? Judge for yourself:

In Him, had not these two families, one of which is the Most Holy Trinity, and the other humanity, united in a ravishing way? As the Church sings in one of her hymns of triumph, the Word of God having become flesh, these two houses, one of which is that of the Most High, and the other, very small, ours! were closely united. Participating in both, Christ has become their angle of love¹ !

He continues to play this role every day in the Catholic Church, where he unceasingly joins earth to heaven, making Christians children of God through his sacraments.

What's more, before the Revolution, wasn't Christ the angle of love in civil society itself? Had He not brought together, united, rich and poor, masters and slaves, Barbarians and peoples of Rome and Athens, the white race and the black race? In Him, all Adam's children bowed to one another, joining hearts and hands. Among them, alas! there have always been distances, contrasts, castes, enmities, extremes; but in Jesus Christ, these distances were erased, these contrasts were harmonized, these castes were melted, these enmities were softened, these extremes were touched: the attractive cornerstone had finally subjugated everything, bringing it all into loving union!

This was how the Christian nations were formed. Indeed, what were the Christian nations? Admirable communities of men and

1 *Alto ex Olympi vertice*

Summi Parentis Filius, Ceu monte desectus lapis Terras in iinas decidens, Donius supernæ et infinité Utrumque junxit anguluni. . '

(Hymn from the Office of the Dedication, Roman Breviary) of peoples united by faith, by tradition, by language, by morals, by soil, and also by the vocation to spread the truth, to enlighten nations less advanced towards God, and to bring them, at the price of labor and the chance of death, eternal goods, justice and civilization. But of all these glories of which the Christian nations were justly heirs: of their faith, their traditions, their language, their mores, their soil, their vocation, was it not Christ who was their foundation? was it not He their meeting point?

And so, around Christ, the divine cornerstone, for eighteen centuries, in a magnificent concert of balance and progress, this triple marvel had been formed and developed: the Catholic Church, the Christian nations, civilization.

But in 1789, France gave the signal for a new order of things, and in its inauguration, the cornerstone, Christ, was rejected.

What will become of the famous cornerstone? Will it remain in the scrap heap where the National Assembly has relegated it as useless? If it did, it would no longer be the living stone. That's its name again, in the Scriptures h Any other stone is inert; moved, it remains in the corner where it's relegated; but this one, it's alive, it's not resigned to inertia! From the dawn of the centuries, this stone, though held in reserve, was the driving force behind empires. At the head of the book of the world, it is written of me^{25 26} ; empires arranged and disarranged themselves in view of its reception¹. And now that she has

manifested herself and, visible in the conjunction of ancient and new centuries, has vanquished the pagan chaos and brought forth, for the eyes of men and angels, these marvels called the Catholic Church, Christianity and civilization, do we imagine that she will submit to a state of discardedness and inertia? Think again, proud legislators of '89. The living stone, humble in its foundations which are the crib and the cross, is a herd in its edifice which is the Catholic or universal Church. You no longer want her at the foundation of the new society and modern nations: heaven will make other arrangements in her favor.

What other arrangements?

The inspired Book of Job hints at them:

"The Lord spoke to Job out of the midst of a whirlwind and said to him, 'Where were you when I laid the foundations of laterre? Tell me, if you have understanding. Do you know who laid the cornerstone, when the morning stars all praised me and the angels shouted for joy^{27 28}?

So when the Creator laid the cornerstone of the world, Christ, the supreme goal of creation, the morning stars and the angels vied with each other in praise and rejoicing. And throughout the ages, it has been the custom of the ancients always to place the cornerstone of buildings in the midst of songs and instruments, as if to recall and perpetuate the honor paid to the divine cornerstone of the world¹. Well, you don't need to be a prophet to announce that these transports of joy and these testimonies of honor will be repeated with regard to the Rebuke of '89. You no longer wanted Him as the cornerstone of your new edifice, you imprudent architects: heaven will know how to make new arrangements for Him in its turn. This living stone will move outside the government of France, which discarded it, outside Christianity, which no longer exists; it will move, and attract peoples in a different way. New dulls, new two^{29 30} will organize themselves around it, enter into conjunction with it: it will take time, it will take its time! But the day will come when cries of joy, songs and the sound of instruments will once again be heard; and the peroration of world history will see the same feast renewed as at its genesis: the morning stars and the choirs of angels applauded the placement of the divine cornerstone; the applause will begin again, for it is ineradicable. And while Christ and his Church preside over ever more extensive, ever more glorious destinies, may heaven grant that, in contrast to the shouts of joy and the sound of instruments, the cries of pain and the crash of collapses are not shared by guilty governments and peoples!

VI

Alas, at the very moment when official France was about to reject the Christ of its fundamental Constitution, that phenomenon which almost always accompanies great mistakes took place: illusion. The Moniteur has preserved traces of this illusion in a dithyramb in honor of the night of August 4³¹, in which impiety vies with fever and drunkenness: the accents would not have been more enthusiastic had it been a question of celebrating the sacred night on which the Savior of the world was born:

"In one night, the face of France changed; the old order of things that force had maintained, despite the opposition of a hundred generations, was overturned.

"In one night, the famous tree of feudalism, whose shadow covered the whole of France, was uprooted.

"In one night, the farmer became the equal of the man who, by virtue of his ancient scrolls, drank the sweat and devoured the fruit of his labors. Man has reclaimed the place that nature and reason once gave him.

"In one night, the long undertakings of the court of Rome, its abuses, its greed, have found an end and an insurmountable barrier that wisdom and human reason have just laid down for all eternity.

"In one night, the triple power of feudalism, aristocracy and parliament has been annihilated.

"In one night, France was saved, regenerated ¹!

What fever, what delirium! And what an illusion! Doesn't it seem as if we're glimpsing a mad white doe

who, having crossed and abandoned the protective park, is drunkenly enjoying her freedom at the very moment when, with the shadows of night descending, the wild beasts are lying in wait and are going to devour her? O poor France, which repudiates its ancient Christian constitution and, by the most sacrilegious abuse of words, proclaims itself saved, regenerated, you had become, however, the white nation of Christ on a Christmas night, at the baptism of Clovis: and now, this memory weighs heavily on you!

Bossuet wrote in his great style: "Il y a des lois fondamentales qu'on ne peut changer"; en violant les, on ébranle tous les fondements de la terre. It is then that the nations seem to stagger as if troubled and overcome by wine, as the prophets speak. The spirit of vertigo possesses them and their fall is inevitable: because the peoples have violated the laws, changed public law, and broken the most solemn pacts²."

The eagle of Meaux saw and signaled the wavering of the em-

1 Mo ni/eur, 17 89, no. 33.

2 Bossuet, Polit, taken from VÉcrit. livie I, article iv, proposition vijii. pires, in the hypothesis that fundamental laws were to be changed; but what would he have thought, what would he have announced, if he could have foreseen that a day was to come when the very support of fundamental laws, Christ, would be removed and rejected! Here are the rigorous consequences of collapse that will be deduced, in time, from the unholy uprooting carried out by F Assemblée nationale:

Rejected from the fundamental constitution of France, Christ will then be rejected from public laws, then from State institutions, then from State morals, then, inevitably, by virtue of the State's omnipotence, from private institutions, from private morals: and then, with the cornerstone nowhere to be found, what will become of France, and what will become of us in France? We'll feel ourselves wavering, faltering; we'll feel ourselves disjointed, dying! Everything will go through this tremendous chan- cellement, everything will undergo this mortal dislocation; and it will not occur to the hardened legislators of unfortunate revolutionized France to say to one another: Let's take back the stone of the angle³²!...

To make matters worse, a fearsome auxiliary will help this disintegration, and France herself will have called him into her bosom! an auxiliary of ruins whose entire past the National Assembly will have thought it necessary to amnesty. Indeed, at the very moment when it repudiated the divine cornerstone, the Assembly, in an incredible, distressing, impious contrast, admitted the Jewish enemy of Christ as a citizen. Let's examine this masterpiece of imperialism and short-sightedness.

a great and terrible lesson. All of a sudden, the voice of a few sophists brings new opinions and new desires to this lost people. They became disgusted with their beliefs and the tutelary doctrines that had lifted them so high. Tempted by the fruit of the tree of science, they want to leave their condition and become like God, to whom alone belongs all sovereignty. Suddenly, this attack is punished, like that of the first man, by an irrevocable death sentence, which the culprit himself is charged with carrying out." Who wrote this? Lamennais in 1836 (Indifférence, t. I). We don't agree with him that the death warrant is irrevocable. There are too many saints in heaven who, along with the Virgin Mary, have appealed for mercy! But the punishment continues, long and {reaching.

CHAPTER III

A WAR MACHINE IN JEWISH HANDS

I. The Declaration of the Rights of Man becomes a war machine in Jewish hands. French society drew its inspiration for the Revolution from the paganism condemned by the Gospel; the Trojan horse, an ancient war machine, will make it understand what happened to the Jews. - II Virgil's account of the perfidious horse entering the walls of Troy, the Greeks came out of it: the modern Hebrews came out of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.- III. By whom this disastrous machine of Human Rights was built; what historical documents suggest. - IV. The most elementary precautions of prudence neglected,

alas! by the Constituent Assembly and its successor governments. – V. The episode of the snakes that embrace Laocoon when the horse is introduced into the walls of Troy is also repeated when the Declaration of the Rights of Man becomes a war machine.

I

The Declaration of the Rights of Man was bound to produce unpleasant surprises, as well as evils. "One is punished where one has sinned"; the guilty, be they nations or individuals, justify, by their setbacks and misfortunes, the truth of the old adage. French society, at odds with Christ, will find its punishment in its very Constitution: the Jewish preponderance that will emerge from it will be the punishment of the Rights of Man.

A martyr of the Revolution, a veritable standard of contradiction for the new times, Pope Pius VI, declared that "the Rights of Man or principles of 89 were no less opposed to civil society than to religion, *Illa sgiliet jura hominis religioni et societati adversantia*". It would be easy to draw up a long list of disasters and calamities that have befallen civil society; but our task here must be limited to pointing out the calamity of the Hebrew invasion.

How can a wrathful Providence allow the Jews to become the punishment for the Rights of Man?

In that this disastrous Constitution, proclaimed to be the new, unique basis of society, will be transformed into a war machine in their hands.

War machine! is indeed the appropriate term. In the past, this name was given to instruments and constructions used to breach walls and provide cover for besiegers. The ancients were very skilful at building and directing these machines; the invention of gunpowder has completely lost their use. But the Jews found their way back to the famous Declaration of Rights: they used it to knock down walls, first in France, and to dismantle society everywhere, but with cover!

At the end of the last century, society was drunk with paganism: we have already described this degeneration³³.

Everyone was delirious for the Greeks and Romans; and the French Revolution had exploded, taking as its models Brutus and the fierce henchmen of Rome and Sparta, after the court of Louis XIV had debased itself in mythological pleasures. It seems that this ungrateful society, which in its ideas and tendencies had taken up the side of paganism against the Gospel, was reserved a means of punishment inscribed in the most famous splendors of paganism: the war machine known as the Trojan horse. What the perfidious wooden horse was for Priam's light-hearted city, the Declaration of the Rights of Man will be for French society. What stiffness must have existed in the contours of this horse! But didn't your constitution of the Rights of Man, unfortunate legislators of '89, that constitution with its abstract, geometric forms, present the same stiffness and the same danger³⁴?

Didn't Virgil's poetry give him immortality²? And then, what seemed to belong only to Fable has become, since the Revolution, the most poignant of realities: for, if fables are the history of rude times, isn't it fair to say that catastrophes that have something fabulous about them are the history of times of decadence and apostasy?

Let's take a look at the two war machines: the one of yesteryear and the one of today.

II

Before translating Virgil's beautiful verses, it may be useful to remind the reader of what happened at Troy.

The city had been under siege for ten years. At the end of this time, the Greeks pretended to withdraw and left a huge wooden horse on the shore, in whose creepers their strongest warriors had hidden. The Trojans, believing that this colossus had been raised to satisfy a vow, brought it inside their walls. During the night, the Greeks emerged from the sides of the machine, opened the gates of the city to their companions and delivered Troy to the plunder.

Here, now, are Virgil's verses¹ :

at this date what is most remarkable in times called fabulous or heroic: fabulous because of the fables with which the stories of these times are wrapped; heroic, because of those whom poets have called gods and heroes." (Bossuet, Disc, sur l'hist. unir., I^{re} part.) .

¹ Ducendum ad sedes simulacrum, orandaque divæ

Numina, conclamant. -

Dividhnus muros et meenia pandimus urlis. Accingunt onines operi, pedibusque rotarum

I.a Jewish predominance.

It is suggested that we lead the colossus to the home of Pallas, and implore the goddess's protection: such is the general cry. We breach our walls and open the city walls.

Wheels slide under the horse's feet and cables tighten around its neck. Young boys and girls surround it, singing hymns and touching the ropes.

Menacingly, she slid into the heart of the city: O my homeland! oh Ilion, dwelling place of the gods;

ramparts of the Trojans, famous for war! Four times she paused on the very threshold of the gates, and four times the sound of weapons rang through her foliage. But we carry on unmoved, and we

Subjiciunt lapsus, et stuppea vincula collo Intendunt. Scandit fatalis machina muros, Foeta armis ; pueri circum innuptæque puellse Sacra canunt, funemqiie manu contingere gaudent. Ilia subit, mediæque minans illabitur urbi.

O patria, o divum domus Ilium, et inclyta bello

Mœnia Dardanidum ! quater ipso in limine portæ Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.

Instamus tamen immemores cæcique furore, Et monstrum infelix sacrata sistimus arce

Vertitur interea cœlum, et ruit Oceano Nox, Involvens umbra magna terramque polumque,

Myrmidonumque dolos ; fusi per mœnia Teucris Conticuere; sopor fessos complectitur artus

Incluses utero Danaos et pinea fartim Laxat claustra Sinon. Illos patefactus ad auras Reddit equus

Invadunt urbem somno vinoque sepultam :

Cæduntur vigiles; portisque patentibus omnes Accipiunt socios, atque agmina conscia jungunt. let's place the fatal monster in the citadel's sacred Venceinte.

However, night rises from the bosom of Z Ocean, shrouding the earth, the sky and the wiles of the Greeks in a thick shadow. The city falls silent, and sleep seizes the weary limbs of its defenders...

A traitor stealthily frees the Greeks locked in their wooden prison, and opens the horse's haunches to bring them back into the light; from this dark lair, the principal chiefs joyfully emerge, sliding along a cable. They invade the city, buried in wine and sleep, massacre the sentries, and, opening the gates, receive all their companions and rally to their conspired battalions.

It was the hour when the first sleep begins for the unfortunate mortals, and, by a boon from the gods, insinuates itself with such char nie into their senses.

Tempus erat quo prima quies mortalibus ægris Incipit, et dono divum gratissima serpit.

In somnis ecce ante oculos mœstissimus Hector Visus adesse mihi, largosque effundere fletus.... Hostis habet muros

Si Tergama dextra Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent

Arduus arinatos inediis in incenibus adstans Fundit equus

Quis cladein illius noctis, quis funera fando Explicet, aut possit lacrymis æqtiare labores? ITrbs antiqua ruit, multos dominata per annos

Ac veluti summis antiquam in montibus ornum Quum ferro accisam crebrisque bipennibus instant

Eruere agricolæ certatim; ilia usque ininatur, Et tremefacta comain concusso vertice nutat; Yulneribus donec paulatiin evicta, supremum Congemuit, traxitque jugis avulsa ruinam.

In a dream I thought I saw Hector appear to me, overwhelmed with sadness and shedding copious tears,

uttering deep groans; he said to me: ((Ah! flee, son of a goddess, and hide from the flames that are kindling, the enemy holds our walls! If Troy could be defended by the arm of a mortal, this arm would have defended it!"

The menacing horse, erect in the midst of our ramparts, spews forth streams of combatants.

How can we put into words the disasters and massacres of that night? Who could pay a just tribute of tears to such misfortunes? The ancient city that had reigned supreme for so many years crumbled... So it is when, on the mountain tops, woodcutters, iron in hand, strive over and over to cut down an ancient ash tree: under the redoubled blows of the axe, the tree long threatens and sways its trembling foliage with every jerk, until, gradually exhausted by its wounds, it utters a final groan and falls torn from the mountain top.

Such, in part, is Virgil's vivid description: let's move on to the sons of Jacob.

The Jews will emerge from the Declaration of Human Rights just as the Greeks emerged from the monster's flanks.

Let's take the most vivid lines from the great poet's story:

We breach our walls, and open the city walls. -In 1789, the imprudent French Assembly itself breached the walls, opening the enclosure through which the Jews would enter and take over many things.

The fatal machine broke through the walls, carrying war in its wake. - The Constitution of Human Rights is also a fatal machine, and the striking expression used by the poet suits it all too well: *foeta arnis*, carrying war in its flanks. Is it not from her murderous fecundity that the Terror, the Commune, bloody battles, domineering Judaism and many other calamitous surprises will emerge?

Young boys and girls surround her, singing hymns and touching the ropes. -Alas! what hymns have not been sung at civic festivals in honor of the "Free Constitution". Long lines of young women and girls, dressed in white gowns, decked out in the colors of the nation, preceded by drums and timpani, marched to the temple, escorted by citizen cohorts; and after thanking the heavens for the conquest of liberty, came to the Hôtel de Ville to pay homage to the heroes of the Revolution.

I Moniteur, n° 33.

The machine moves forward, threatening its way into the heart of the city. - Into the heart! This was precisely what Louis XVI wanted to avoid. His plan was to welcome the Israelites, with kindness, into civil society, but to keep them, as it were, on the frontiers of society. On the contrary, with the help of the Constitution of the Rights of Man, they would advance to the heart...

Four times she stopped on the very threshold of the gates, and four times the sound of arms rang in her flanks. - Several times too, as we shall enumerate below, the question of the emancipation of the Jews in the name of the rights of man, brought to the bar of the Constituent Assembly, was literally stopped on the threshold of the session room. The Assembly was frightened, and seemed to hear a sinister noise.

Preoccupied, it kept sending her back, sending her back up to fourteen times.

But we carry on unmoved, and place the fatal monster within the sacred precincts of the citadel. - In the last hour of the Constituent Assembly's existence, all emotion ceased; the fatal decision was promulgated amidst a gloomy silence: In the name of human rights, Jews are citizens!

"The enemy holds the walls!... what a cry! - It would be the terrifying cry of Christian society a few years later. Throughout Alsace, this impression of terror would circulate: "The Estates General have issued a decree admitting Jews as citizens, and declaring them capable of all offices and employment. O misfortune, misfortune for our homeland! Drive them out, otherwise we are all lost 35.

The menacing horse, rearing up in the middle of our ramparts, spewed forth streams of fighters. - What impure streams of fighters will we not see coming out of this infernal Constitution of '89: Jacobins, Communards, Socialists, Freethinkers, Atheists, and, in such bad company, alas! the Israelites.

This ancient city is crumbling.... - It's all over for the Christian homelands too, unless the Almighty

stretches out his arm!

In truth, wouldn't you say that the poetically inspired author of the fourth Eglogue was also a bit of a prophet in his account of the Trojan horse? Raise your heads, you who smile: do you not see around you and above you, emerging from every avenue, crowning every height, both the Hebrew tribes and the socialist hordes, silently completing the conquest of French society? In 1789, all these consequences were still shrouded and concealed in the premises of the sinister Declaration, as the Greeks were, in the flanks of the monster!

III

But? who built this disastrous machine of human rights? We've been talking about it for two chapters now, without having researched its genesis; now is the time to ask: who built it?

A mystery!

Brought before the National Assembly to be voted on and accepted, it has never revealed its true birthplace.

At the origin of the fundamental constitutions of peoples, at the cradle of legislation, we encounter names which, like ancient oaks, shade these legislations at the same time as they immortalize their authors: for the Decalogue, Moses; for the legislation of Athens, Solon; for the legislation of Sparte, Lycurgus; for the legislation of Crete, Minos; for Roman legislation, Numa. Here, nothing similar. No proper, radiant name can be invoked: it's a product, an offspring on which must be inscribed this impure and dark designation: Legion / Unless *Legion*. we prefer to designate it by this disdain, which once fell from Voltaire's lips: I'd rather obey a beautiful lion than two hundred rats of my kind!

Indeed, in the making of this hybrid work, alongside the patriotism and good faith of a few, the perfidy and conspiracy of a larger number, and the anxiety and ignorance of the majority, have come together.

There were masterminds and ringleaders. Here is what the documents have allowed us to gather as authentic:

a) As soon as the Estates-General were convened by Louis XVI in 1789,¹ France sent, in addition to its appointed representatives, its cahiers. The cahiers were a compilation of the nation's grievances and wishes, in which the points calling for reform were brought to the attention of the king and the meeting of deputies. There were cahiers du clergé, cahiers de la noblesse, cahiers du tiers état, and, because of the importance of the capital, the cahier de la ville de Paris¹.

Or,

With regard to the need for a Constitution expressed in many of these cahiers, the cahier de la ville de Paris alone instructs its representatives to demand, as a preamble, a declaration of the Rights of the Nation:

"They are expressly enjoined not to consent to any subsidy, to any loan, until the Declaration of the Rights of the Nation has been passed into law.^{36 37}" This Declaration of the Rights of the Nation follows.

Among the clergy's cahiers, several also demanded "that, before anything else, a general and fundamental law be promulgated, which would positively enunciate and declare the principal rights of citizens, provinces and the Nation "³⁸.

So, as yet, only the rights of the Nation, of citizens, were being discussed, with little or no mention of human rights¹.

b) Suddenly, the term "rights of the Nation" was replaced by another, superior term: the States General were asked to define the rights of "man" and of the citizen. As a result, the work of the Assembly was no longer directed towards a specific French goal: it was a universal, abstract goal. Personne was mistaken: this new denomination was borrowed from the Social Contract and Rousseau's *Emile*. The philosopher from Geneva became the pontiff of the Revolution. Someone has

said "that the human race had lost its titles, and that Rousseau made it regain them"; isn't it a hundred times more accurate to say, thinking of the beautiful surprises that were to come out of the flanks of this machine of human rights, "that French society had very good titles, recognized as such, and that Rousseau made it lose them"?

c) But to whom do we attribute this transformation from "rights of the Nation" to "rights of man"? M. le comte de Clermont-Tonnerre had been chosen to examine the cahiers of the provinces, and put in charge of

' A cahier de la noblesse makes a vague mention of this. Deputies from a small locality (Clermont en Beauvoisis, county seat, near Beauvais) were charged with insisting "that, above all, a declaration of the rights of men be made, establishing their liberty, their property and their security". Bûchez and Roux, t. I, p. 329.

to present a summary to the National Assembly. He read out his report in the session of July 27, 1789. Dividing the cahiers into two broad categories, those calling for the maintenance of the old existing constitution, with correction of abuses, and those desiring a new constitution, he pronounced, with regard to the latter, this resounding sentence:

"Those, Messieurs, believed that the first chapter of the Constitution should contain the Declaration of the Rights of Man, those imprescriptible rights for the maintenance of which the Society was established".

Now, which cahiers made this request? From which provinces, which seneschaussées, which bailliages did these cahiers come? This substitution of the supposed request for a declaration of the rights of man, for the request for a declaration of the rights of the nation or of the citizen contained in the cahiers, is a capital thing in the history of France. Was this ever done? Were the cahiers asking for a declaration of man's rights, or were they not? Let's take a look at it in the vengeful hour of this centenary! Monsieur le Comte, if you have introduced this substitution into the cahiers de France, you have done great damage to our poor France!

Of all the presidents of the Assembly who have ever sat in the chair

1 Why did M. Thiers deem it appropriate to reject in the notes at the end of his volume M. de Clermont-Tonnerre's report on the Cahiers, a document which is so serious and so important? (See Thiers, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. I, note 4, p. 354-63).

At the Constituante, the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre was the most favorable to the Jews, as we shall see later. They took advantage of his turn as president to present or advance their requests.

d) Following Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre's report, a committee was appointed to draft a Declaration of the Rights of Man, and to receive drafts sent in from all over France.

So, who was the promoter of the all-too-famous Declaration of Rights that has governed France for a hundred years?

Officially, Fun or the other of these three characters, along with Mirabeau, who put the finishing touches to the drafting work:

LA FAYETTE

"Thiers, *Histoire de la Révolution*, t. II p. 150-1. - When the Marquis de - la Fayette had read his draft Declaration of Rights to the National Assembly in the session of July 11, 1789, the Comte de Lally-Tolendal, succeeding him at the podium, said: "The author of the motion speaks of liberty as he knew how to defend it." (Universal applause.) *Moniteur*, 1789, n° 17. - *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française*, Bûchez et Roux, vol. II, p. 79.

MOUMER

The committee charged with preparing the work of the Constitution had appointed Mounier rapporteur of the preamble, i.e. the Declaration of Rights. Mounier read his report in the session of July

9, thus paving the way for La Fayette, who only made his motion on July 11. Mounier proposed the question to the Assembly, in the following order: Declaration of human rights; principles of monarchy; rights of the nation; rights of the king; rights of citizens under the French government. (Moniteur, n° 16.)

SIÉYÈS

This famous abbé, with his geometric mind and dry, metaphysical way of discussing, was in fact the metaphysician of the Revolution. He found the formulas that Mirabeau's eloquence fertilized. As a member of the Constitution Committee, he presented a draft that was rejected on account of its metaphysical obscurity, but which, when printed, exerted a considerable influence on people's minds: *Préliminaires de la Constitution française, suivis d'une reconnaissance et exposition des droits de l'homme*, 1789. Siéyès may therefore have preceded Mounier and la Fayette in this conception.

The Marquis de la Fayette, the lawyer Mounier and the Abbé Siéyès all belonged to secret societies³⁹.

e) Officially, as we have said, they were the promoters of the Declaration of Rights before the National Assembly; for it is now perfectly well established that, before being presented to the Estates-General, the draft Declaration of the Rights of Man had been conceived and elaborated in secret society lodges, not only in France, but also abroad. The conscientious and revealing works of

P. Deschamps shed unmistakable light on this point. Let us quote two passages:

One day, in the salon of the Count de Nicolaï, first president of the Paris Chamber of Accounts, shortly after the opening of the Estates General, a discussion arose on the question of whether France had a Constitution: did it need one? would it have one?

This was the theme of the discussion, in which deputies from the right, such as Maury and Cazalès, philosophers such as La Harpe and Marmontel, and other lesser-known men took part. On the sidelines stood a rather silent figure who was said to belong to Masonic societies and to know their secrets. But why a written constitution? said the members of the right; France has one that the centuries have built up little by little, and with which it is doing very well. England alone has a clearly formulated constitution," replied the supporters of new ideas.

The conversation continued in this tone, when the silent figure rose to his feet and confidently uttered the following words: "We don't need a constitution, that's true; but we're going to have one, and this constitution will travel around the world. It will go all the way to Russia, all the way to Constantinople⁴⁰.

The other passage is no less significant:

Under the direction of the Grand-Orient, in Paris, the lodge known as Les Amis réunis was more specifically responsible for foreign correspondence. They were also known as philalèthes or seekers of truth. To further impose itself on the public, this lodge had also become the lodge of aristocratic pleasure and luxury. While the senior brothers, along with the women who had also become adepts, danced and sang in the common room about the sweetness of their equality and freedom, they were unaware that above them was a secret committee where everything was being prepared to soon extend this equality beyond the lodge, over ranks and fortunes, castles and thatched cottages, marquises and bourgeois.

It was really above the common lodge that was another lodge called the Secret Committee of United Friends. As long as the party lasted on the lower floor, two terrible brothers with swords, one at the bottom of the stairs, the other by the door, defended the entrance to this new sanctuary. Here were the archives of the secret correspondence; the very person to whom all the packages from the brothers in Germany and Italy were addressed, was not allowed to cross the threshold. He didn't know the number of letters; he was simply in charge of delivering them. They came to be received, and the secret remained with the committee.

At the opening of the Estates General, all Masonic convents were convened in Paris by this steering committee. They dealt with work that prudence had forbidden to entrust to paper, and even less to printing. The cahiers of 1789 had brought to the Estates General the expression of the provinces' attachment to the Catholic faith and monarchical government. The United Lodges took their revenge on the drafting of these cahiers⁴¹.

e) Finally, when the Declaration of the Rights of Man was prepared and drafted in the lodges, and brought before the National Assembly, Masonic action was once again felt. Stormy debates ensued, during which "the people, through their tax refusals, the rabble through their crimes, the demagogues of the districts through their disorganizing motions, translated in their own way the human rights discussed at the National Assembly. Twenty-eight out of thirty Assembly bureaux had rejected them. They were adopted in public discussion, under threats from the tribunes f".

Doesn't all these documents shed a great deal of light on how the Declaration of Rights came about? Were we wrong to think that it had been fashioned like a war machine? These drafting conspiracies, this work in the lodges, these threats from the tribunes – how reminiscent of the dull thud of weapons that resounded in the flanks of the wooden horse when it was introduced into the citadel enclosure:

Quater ipso in limine portx

Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma declere.

11 However, one point remains to be clarified: were the Jews involved in the creation of this rights machine?

That the Jews had a direct influence on the drafting of human rights is certainly not the case;

But that they had an indirect influence is possible;

11 There is no formal proof, but here are some presumptions:

a) It seems that some of them were aware of what was being prepared, since, as early as the end of 1787, the Israelite Gerfbeer (the leader of the siege of Strasbourg^{42 43}), whom we will soon see again on the scene,

expressed himself in these terms, in a petition addressed to Louis XVI: "The suppliant hopes that a public law will no longer leave any pretext for the city of Strasbourg, or any other city, to treat an unfortunate nation with such rigor, and that it will no longer be necessary to grant a special pardon so that the Jews can be among Your Majesty's subjects. The request ended, near the end, with the words: "Ur. jew is even more man than he u is jew h"

Was Cerfberr aware of the human rights thesis through his reading of Rousseau's books, or through his relations with several of the main leaders of the Revolution? The documents we provide in the following chapters lead us more towards the second hypothesis.

b) Jewish links with secret societies were becoming very close². In particular, it was the Philalèthes or Amis réunis lodge which led the revolutionary movement of 1789 in the capital; we have just established this in the preceding pages, according to P. Deschamps. Now, it could be that this sect of Philalèthes had, if not a Jewish origin, at least a very pronounced inclination, right from its formation, for the circumcised gent³.

one r. A slight modification needs to be made. Autographed letters of the character, since found, establish the writing of his name as follows: Cerfberr.

1 Archives nationales, O1, 610,

2 See YEntrée des Israélites dans la Société française, livre III, chap. vi, § 4 and 5.

3 "In the second half of the xvije century, a person whose real name is unknown, but who called himself Eyrénée Philalèthe, travelled throughout France, England, Holland and America, speaking of a new "Jewish preponderance".

La Prépondérance juive. 6

In addition, this lodge of the Philalèthes or United Friends had the attribution of correspondence with foreign countries, with brothers in Germany, England and elsewhere. One of the most prominent and listened-to brothers in 1789 was Dohm of Berlin, who in 1781 wrote the book *De la réforme de la situation politique des juifs*, which we said "was, in its occult intuience, the counterpart of Rousseau's *Contrat social*¹". The entire theory of humanitarianism or human rights is laid out in advance. This is a crucial point.

c) Finally (something that has not been noticed enough), the vow expressed in the Cahiers of 1789, especially in those of the city of Paris, was, as we reported above, a declaration of the rights "of the Nation" or "of the citizens". Why, then, did the wish for a more general declaration of "human" rights suddenly take first place? Would it be foolhardy to think that the cause of the Jews was not absolutely unrelated to this substitution? Were powerful friends like Clermont-Tonnerre, Mirabeau and Grégoire not going to be able to introduce it through this circuitous route? Indeed, it is remarkable that if the question had been maintained in its original terms, "rights of the nation, of citizens", the Jews would have had nothing to do with it, nothing to claim. They would not have been admitted to claim, especially in the humanitarian religion that was to be established. His writings have a pronounced Jewish tinge. It is obviously not without some antecedent connection that this appellation of Philalèthe is taken at the beginning of the eighteenth century by the group of the Englishman Toland (very favorable to the Jews) and later by the most advanced elements of the other sects." (Deschamps, *les Sociétés secrètes*, t. III, p. 35.)

1 See [*Entrée des Israélites*, etc., livre III, chap. vu, § 4. with the insistence we shall say, the benefit of rights, being neither citizens nor natives of the French nation. They would easily have been rejected. For these reasons, it is not altogether improbable that they were indirectly involved in the construction of the ill-fated machine. However, beyond these presumptions, nothing can be confirmed. What is certain, however, is that with their usual perceptiveness, they understood at once the profit they were going to be able to make from the resounding Declaration. To sum up:

The Greeks built the wooden horse themselves, and hid in it to surprise the Trojans;

The Jews assisted in the construction of the Rights of Man, perhaps pushed it, and when it was finished, ambushed it, and went on to surprise every country.

IV

Although dangerous in itself, the Declaration of Rights could have avoided becoming a war machine turned against society, if precautions had been taken. But precisely the most elementary precautions were neglected. The unfortunate city of Troy is still the epitome of such carelessness. Only, in Troy, the precautions were only slight; in France, the negligence was criminal.

In fact, two of these precautions were essential, and not only were they not taken, they were carefully avoided.

The first was the idea of duties to be recalled alongside rights. One cannot exist without the other. Even philosophy and morality agree that the notion of duty precedes the notion of right. The former is simpler, the latter more complex. Every right has a corresponding duty, but not every duty has a corresponding right.

Had this precaution been taken, had a declaration of duties at least accompanied that of rights, the way would have been barred to the Jews. Indeed, as the Parliamentary History of the French Revolution wisely observes: "Suppose that, instead of its Declaration, the National Assembly had proclaimed the principle which has always been the origin of social organization, namely : How different would its career have been? Then, the opponents, whoever they were, would have been asked what duties they fulfilled - None, they would have replied. - So you have no rights*. What duties do you fulfill? the Jews would similarly have been asked. - None," they would have replied. - So don't demand rights; wait

for them to be granted to you in moderation. They were stopped!

This safeguard provided by the notion of duty was not lost on a number of deputies to the National Assembly, even the most enthusiastic⁴⁴ 45.

In the extremely tumultuous (morning) session of August 4, 1789, a deputy, M. Camus¹, having proposed adding the word "devoir" to the Declaration of Rights, the room suddenly resounded with applause from the clergy, while a veritable hurricane erupted from the ranks of the opposition. The Bishop of Chartres rose to his feet, struggled to maintain silence, but was finally able to utter the following words: "If a declaration of rights is necessary, there is a pitfall to be avoided. We run the risk of arousing egoism and pride. The flattering expression of rights must be skilfully spared; it should be accompanied by the corrective expression of duties. The entire clergy renews its applause. Shouts and stamping of feet came from elsewhere. The Chairman put Mr. Camus' proposal to the vote, as an amendment to the main question. The amendment was rejected by 570 votes to 4332.

That's it, the Jews can pass: there's nothing left in the Declaration to stop them.

Only the clergy, along with the juriconsult Camus, were concerned about the future!

Another precaution, more elementary, more important, the most important of all, was consciously and deliberately neglected by the Constituent Assembly.

the barriers that can and must stop it. Many have argued the contrary; I disagree, and believe that the Declaration of Rights is inseparable from the Declaration of Duties". (Moniteur, 1789, n° 33)

1 M. Camus, juriconsult, deputy of Paris to the Estates General, was a stubborn Jansenist, but also a man of fearlessness and unequalled probity. He was perhaps the most honest politician of the Revolution. (Dictionn. de D  zobry.)

2 Moniteur, n° 33. - Ilist. parlent. de la R  vol., t. II, p. 221-222. and, subsequently, by the governments, all without exception, which were to follow one another, alas! in the revolutionary path. We shall be recalling this culpable omission more than once in the course of our narrative, because it was the crucial error that accompanied the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It can be stated as follows: While this Declaration of Rights will introduce and implant Jews as citizens among the populations of France and elsewhere, among these populations the Christian faith is in no way protected by governments; and not only is it not protected, but it is beaten down and taken away from the populations by most governments.

This surpasses all imaginable ineptitude and treachery!

The Trojans didn't surrender themselves, nor did they throw down their weapons at the Greeks who, from the flanks of the sinister horse and the open gates, poured in from all sides. Oh, no, they didn't throw down their arms. To the people of France, governments withdrew their weapons, the weapon par excellence: faith; they delivered them unarmed!

When Troy was on fire, the unfortunate but valiant Hector, appearing to Aeneas, was able to tell him: 8/ 7Way could be defended by the arm of a mortal, this arm would have defended it!... Since 1789, many a government has had the right to repeat this justification in the face of the threatening hordes of socialism or the invading tribes of Judaism: for their arm, instead of guaranteeing the populations, has torn away the shield of faith! The proof is overwhelming:

Already, the Declaration of the Rights of Man was, by Y eliminating the name of Christ, impious, fatal, dangerous;

Already, the rejection of the statement of duties alongside the statement of rights made it even more dangerous;

But that these two imprudences should have been joined by the enterprise, planned and calculated on the part of some, permitted and accepted by others, of taking the Christian faith away from the populations into whose midst this monster of a war machine was being introduced - ah! this was the

most detestable betrayal as well as the most incredible ineptitude. The Hebrews will soon be the masters of these disarmed populations. If ever faith had been necessary to the people, was it not at the very moment when the Jews would find themselves mixed up with them, spying on their morals and beliefs, ready to take advantage of the slightest lapses, and even provoking them! If ever faith should have been not only protected, but corroborated and enhanced by governments, was it not at the very moment when they gave the French Jews as fellow citizens? For was it not, above all, through faith that the Nations became superior to the Jews? If we confine ourselves to the simple forces of nature, they are inferior to them in several essential respects: they lack their vitality, their skill, their finesse, their tenacity, their understanding and their durability. So now was the time, or never, to tan their ancient Christian faith: that faith which, divinely added to their natural qualities, had caused them to produce, in every sphere of human activity, prodigies and marvels of which the Jews themselves had been astonished and jealous. But, on the other hand, to withdraw this faith from them, the worker of great things, at a time when the Jews were about to become their emulators in civil life, was not to prepare them to become their inferiors, and to come under their yoke? Well, it's to this latter party that so many governments have rallied! Jesus Christ has already been struck out of the new French Constitution: in 93, crosses will soon be broken, churches closed and priests' throats slit; in the years to come, governments will continue, in one form or another and step by step, to undermine the Church, to make it disappear; and it is under such conditions that the Jews are told: Come in, all civil rights belong to you! Ineptitude, treason! We'll complain that they're the masters, that they are; we've done everything to make sure they are! At the same time as they were being introduced into the bosom of generous France, the faith, the shield of her bosom, was being torn from her!

V

A final trait completes the resemblance between the sack of Troy and that which threatens French society. Virgil also drew this last resemblance with a masterly hand. We have not mentioned it in the poet's verses quoted above, holding it in reserve for a particular relief, more striking by that very fact. This is the episode of the snakes embracing Laocoon and his sons.

Laocoon, priest of Neptune, was the only one to suspect the Greeks' trap and blame the Trojans' imprudence. He even threw a javelin into the monster's flanks. The sting fixed itself with a shudder, and the deep cavities gave a muffled groan. Suddenly, a terrible sight struck the eyes of the unfortunate Trojans and threw their hearts into unexpected turmoil.

Let Virgil 1 speak:

Behold, two serpents from Tenedos (I shudder at this account) cross the calm waves, stretch out their immense rings over the sea and head headlong for the shore.

You can see their breasts rising up through the waves and their bloody crests dominating the sea, while the rest of their bodies drag themselves along, skimming the surface.

Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta (Illoresco referens) immensis orbibus angues Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad littora tendunt ; Pectora quorum inter ductus arrecta, jubæque Sanguine" exsuperant undas ; pars cetera pontum Pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga. Fit sonitus spumante salo. Jamque arva tenebatur, Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni, Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora. Diffugimus visu exsanguis; i'ii agniti certo Laocoonta petunt : et primum parva duorum Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus ; Post ipsum auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus; et jam Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis. Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos, Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno ; Clamores simul horrendos ad sidéra tollit
 ■ Quales mugitus, fugitque saucius aram. Taurus. and uncertain excused cervice secant. the liquid plain and their rumps fold into an enormous spiral. The bitter wave foams and resounds.

Already, they were touching the ground, and with their lips red with blood and fire, they darted their tongues and licked their mouths, hissing. We fled at the sight, our hearts frozen with fear.

They, without hesitation, went straight for Laocoon; and first, one and the other snake, embracing the weak bodies of his two sons, entwined their victims and tore off their miserable limbs. Then, as Laocoon flew to their aid, weapons in hand, they seize him too and embrace him with their long folds; twice already, they have embraced his body from the middle, and twice rolled their scaly rump around his neck; they still overtake him with their head and high neck.

He, covered in their slobber and black venom, which stains his bandages, tries with his hands to tear himself away from their embrace, and at the same time utters dreadful cries to the heavens; like a bull roaring, which, wounded in the neck, has fled from the altar, and shaken the insecure axe.

To Virgil's poignant tale, ancient sculpture has added an even more poignant representation, under the chisel of Phidias. The famous marble group in Rome depicts the long agony of Laocoon with his children. Anyone who has seen

BETWEEN THE HANDS OF THE JEWS makes an indelible impression. The agony of a father struggling with his sons against the snakes' folds is unforgettable. O that upright, suffering head of Laocoon—I can still see it! And then that desperate arm holding aloft while the other falls back, halted in their efforts by the reptiles' formidable rings: it's vivid, it's poignant, you want to fly to their rescue!

Looking at this pathetic marble, I said to myself: this is the situation of poor modern society;

The hideous masonry, whose folds are all too reminiscent of Laocoon's snakes, is about to embrace French society. All that is father, all that is linked to that glorious role of paternity of which God himself is the principle, will be included in its embraces. There is the fatherhood of the king for his people.

There is the fatherhood of the priest for souls. There is the fatherhood of the head of the family for his children. This triple paternity will gradually be embraced and slowly suffocated by the hideous, creeping masonry. The Christian monarchy will succumb, the Christian religion will die, the Christian family will crack like bones under formidable rings. Seized in the immense folds and embraces of the Masonic sect, French society will struggle in despair!

And while Masonry thus paralyzes all life and movement, the Jews, free and invading, will make themselves masters of the highest positions.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THE JEWISH QUESTION WAS INTRODUCED

BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1789)

I. From the considerations presented to the reader in the previous chapter, we move on to the details of the facts. – H. Opening of the Estates General: a Jewish deputation from Alsace, Lorraine and the Trois-Évêchés, petitioning the National Assembly. A first but unsuccessful attempt to bring the Jewish question before the Assembly at the most laborious and critical moment of 1789. Curé Grégoire takes the lead. – III. Impatience, among a certain number of Jews, to be recognized as citizens. Reasons for this impatience: 1° the heaped up anger of Alsace; 2° the gall pocket among Jews no less than among commoners and villains. – IV. New plan: the Jews of Paris take the initiative. Relying on the Declaration of the Rights of Man, they demanded the title of citizens, as irreproachable men; and the Jews of Alsace, to obtain it as well, promised Alsatians to resemble the Jews of Paris. This plan did not succeed. – A'. After languishing for several months, the Jewish deputation is brought before the Assembly to present its request, on August 14 (penultimate session of the Assembly at Versailles). It was agreed that the Jewish affair would be examined during the session. – VI. Official introduction of the question of the emancipation of the Jewish people, on Christmas Eve 1789. Civil rights are demanded for Jews,

Protestants, actors and the executioner. Reflections on the singular encounter, at the bar of the Assembly, of the Jews and the executioner. The cross and the guillotine. – VU. Robespierre supports the proposed rehabilitation of Jews and executioner. Israelite historians, in their accounts of this session, have all omitted the mournful coincidence. Probable reason for this omission. The National Assembly rehabilitates the executioner, but not the Jews; consideration of their fate is postponed. Anger of the *Courrier de Paris* newspaper.

I

If the reader has been paying attention, the two preceding chapters, combined like two torches, have shed an accusing light on the Declaration of the Rights of Man, examining it from a point of view that had hitherto remained in the shadows.

In Isaiah's time, the people of Seir came to question the Seer, the prophet, and said to him: "Watchman, what do you see in the night of events; watchman, tell us what you see⁴⁶?" We too, questioning, without any bias, the Spirit of justice and truth who never ceases to hover, even in the darkest days, over the society he preserves and directs, asked him: Incorruptible watchman, what do you see in this preamble to the Revolution that so many people have mistaken for a dawn and which seems to us to conceal darkness and dangers; watchman, tell us what you see? And the Spirit of justice and truth gave us this answer:

We see in this preamble: Christ, who is eliminated from the French Constitution, and the Jews, who are confined to it as if in a war machine...

Ges considérations générales étaient indispensables – Ne fallait-il pas dénoncer la couleur hébraïque qui se dissimule parmi les couleurs de caméléon dont jouit la Déclaration des droits de 1789?

A state of affairs in which impoverishment, outlawry and constant alarm are going to pass to the Christians, and, on the contrary, the accumulation of wealth, the favors of power and security to the Jews, is no longer a normal state of affairs. 11 shows not just a shift in influences, but a reversal of old religious and social data. The Seer, quoted above, said: "As a hungry man dreams that he eats during the night, but when he awakes, he finds himself empty; and as one who is thirsty dreams that he drinks, and after his sleep has passed, he rises again tired and thirsty, and is empty; so will the whole multitude of these Nations be found 47... And, indeed, since they rejected obedience to Christ to govern themselves according to the rights of man, the unfortunate Nations dream, every night, that they eat, and they wake up hungry; that they drink, and they wake up tired and impaired; emptiness, an ever more frightening emptiness, has answered their Declaration of Rights!

Only the children of Jacob do not complain, because abundance comes to them!

Gela alone would be enough to judge a work that has reversed the order of things, and delivered the sources of life...

From these general considerations, we now turn to the details of the facts. Under what circumstances was the Jewish question brought before the National Assembly? Who were its supporters and opponents? What were its vicissitudes? What means did the Hebrews use to bring it to a successful conclusion, and wrest from the Assembly the decree of complete emancipation? These are the little-known, truncated or mutilated facts that we are going to re-establish and bring to light, backed up by unassailable documents. It's a thrilling piece of history.

II

The initiative for the agreement that was to be established between the Jews and the Revolution belongs to the parish priest of Emberménil: it was he who united them. A prizewinner, as we have seen, in the Metz competition, he had found a vein in the question of the Jews. Flattered by their praise and trust, he wanted to make their emancipation his business. Shortly before the opening of the Estates General, he had written to one of the most influential of them, Isaiah Bing of Metz, in these terms:

Emberménil, February 23, 1789.

"Read to me, my dear Bing, on the eve of the Estates-General, shouldn't you consult with other members of your nation, to demand the rights and benefits of citizens? more than ever, here is the moment...

"Always love your inviolable friend.

GRÉGOIRE.

parish priest of Emberménil l.

His advice was heeded, and by the spring of 1789, six Jews were on their way to Paris.

The Estates-General having been convened by Louis XVI, deputies were appointed from all over France, divided into seneschaussées and bailliages, and cahiers were delivered to the deputies. These booklets contained the grievances and wishes of the people; the country expressed itself freely on the reforms it thought useful. The Jews of Alsace, Lorraine and the Trois-Evêchés, who did not enjoy the rights of citizens, were unable to take part in this great movement of national revolt. Nevertheless, in May 1789, "des lettres du garde des sceaux, remis par les intendants, avaient autorisé les juifs à s'assembler par-devant leurs syndics, en la manière accoutée, pour nommer chacun deux députés dans leurs provinces respectives, et apporter les cahiers de leurs doléances, qui devaient être fondus en un seul lors de leur réunion dans la capitale, et remis ensuite au garde des sceaux, pour en référer au roi^{48 49}".

This was done, and the six Jews, on their way to the capital, were these deputies ⁵⁰.

They arrived in Paris, then Versailles, where the Assembly was sitting. They found a rather singular center: the home of Curé Grégoire, deputy for Lorraine, who became their man. It was to him, moreover, that the Garde des Sceaux sent the Jewish cahiers, for use at the Assemblée Nationale : together, protected and protective, they followed the sessions held at Versailles. The sons of Israel, as interested and skilful people, did not lose sight of a single movement of the Assembly, and the naïve and liberal Grégoire, flattered to have the Old Testament under his wings, gave himself the air of Moses seeking a ford to introduce his clients into the land of liberty!

The first attempt was unsuccessful. It was attempted on Monday August 3. The Assembly was in a state of overexcitement that was easy to understand. Letters from the provinces had just brought news that property was falling prey to the most culpable brigandage, castles were being burned, convents destroyed and farms abandoned to pillage. In the preceding session (Saturday August 1st), the discussion on the Constitution had begun feverishly, with the question: Will we or will we not put a Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen at the head of the Constitution? Fifty-six speakers had registered. Finally, in the session that was to follow (Tuesday August 4), the superb explosion of voluntary stripping was to take place, with the clergy and nobility vying with each other in selflessness to aban-

1 " M. le Garde des sceaux actuel m'a renvoyé les pièces pour en faire usage à l'Assemblée nationale ". Motion, etc., p. 5.

Jewish Preponderance. 7 their privileges. The time was ripe for overexcitement. It was, however, this hour that our Grégoire chose. Between the session inaugurating the great discussion of human rights, and the one that would see the nobility and clergy enthusiastically embracing voluntary stripping, he came to ask: the Jews! He appears at the podium, anonymous letters in hand. He wants to read them. A resounding "no" from the audience. But Grégoire is stubborn; it's not for nothing that he's rubbed shoulders with Old Testament people; he insists. The entire Assembly, undoubtedly judging the communication with which he assailed it to be indiscreet and inappropriate, shouted loudly: "Fire, fire, anonymous letters! So well received in the morning, Grégoire reappeared in the gallery that same evening, and, in addition to the looting of convents, castles and farms, he interjected the looting of Jews in Alsace. He exclaimed: "Minister of a religion which regards all men as brothers, I call in this

circumstance for the intervention of the power of the Assembly in favor of this proscribed and unfortunate people.⁵¹" He would have liked to secure a favorable vote, and, since the discussion of human rights was beginning, to direct its first application to his protégés.

The Assembly remained cool.

A few hours later, as we said, the legendary session of the night of August 4th was held. What a subject for reflection these two consecutive sessions were: the Jews coming forward to try to take possession of human rights, and the French nobility, along with the clergy, dispossessing themselves, perhaps too quickly, of their feudal rights and ancient privileges. M. Thiers portrayed this transport thus:

"Royalty had eagerly sacrificed all its prerogatives; but we were faced with the mass of the privileged, and everyone had their privileges: the nobility, the clergy, the Third Estate, the provinces, the towns; and, faced with such a mass of adversaries, we felt the kind of anxiety that an army feels when the first cannon shot of a great battle is about to sound.

"Suddenly, the French nobility, heroic on this occasion as they were at Fontenoy, when they galloped towards the English lines, so as not to leave the infantry the honour of braving these formidable lines alone, the French nobility rushed to the tribune, and were the first to sacrifice their privileges: all their members came forward without exception. The clergy, seized with the same enthusiasm, imitated their example, and came to sacrifice their privileges, tithes and benefices. The Third Estate, in turn, followed with the same enthusiasm; and, when everything had been sacrificed, they still searched their memories to see if there might not be some forgotten privilege that could be placed on the altar which, on that day, was indeed the altar of the fatherland L".

And so, of the French and the Jews, the former stripped of their-

i Speech on political freedoms, delivered by M. Thiers at the Corps législatif, in the session of March 28, 18G5.

laient, les autres se présentaient pour acquérir: c'était pas tout à fait la même chose!

Grégoire didn't succeed. But with his characteristic tenacity, and supported and encouraged by his customers, he was ready to try again: hadn't Moses struck the rock twice? The adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, after months of debate, took place towards the end of August. The parish priest of Emberménil wasted no time; the very next day, he prepared a motion in favor of his protégés; it began as follows: "Messieurs les députés, you have enshrined the rights of man and citizen, allow a Catholic priest to raise his voice in favor of fifty thousand Jews scattered across the kingdom, who, being men, claim the rights of citizens*." The peroration was no less urgent: "As arbiters of their fate, will you, Gentlemen, confine yourselves to sterile compassion? By you, the generous representatives of a people whose freedom you cemented by abolishing feudal slavery. You have proclaimed the king the Restorer of Liberty; he would be humiliated to reign over men who would not enjoy it: fifty thousand Frenchmen have risen up as slaves, it depends on you that they lie down free2!" As you can see, Grégoire was moving fast: Jews are men, so they must be citizens. And then, what a ruse in this last

1 Motion, etc., p. i.

* Ibid, p. 45.

DEVAIT L'ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE 101 phrase: "Fifty thousand Frenchmen have risen as slaves, it depends on you that they go to bed free." But no, Monsieur le curé, it's not fifty thousand Frenchmen, it's fifty thousand Jews who rise and lie down: you're assuming the conclusion!

The National Assembly did not feel it necessary to hear the reading of the motion. So Grégoire let it be printed and addressed it to the public. "May my motion, which could not be pronounced at the National Assembly, dispose the public in favor of the Jews. When their case is discussed, I will redouble my efforts⁵². The comings and goings of this singular shepherd in his efforts to obtain civil rights for the

Jews are reminiscent of the famous fable: *Le Coche et la Mouche* 1.

On an uphill, sandy, uneasy road, Exposed to the sun on all sides, Six strong horses were pulling a coach. Women, monks, old men, all had dismounted.

The carriage was sweating, puffing, rendered.

A fly appears, and approaches the horses, Pretends to animate them by its buzzing, Stings one, stings the other; and thinks at any moment That it makes the machine go 2, Sits on the tiller, on the coachman's nose;

Goes, comes, does the empressée

After a lot of work, the coach reaches the top.

In this exquisite and fine description by the good La Fontaine, there is, alas! the whole story of the efforts of 102 LA QUESTION JUIVE INTRODUE the National Assembly around the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

Judge for yourself: this uphill, sandy, uneasy path, as it expresses so well the new Constitution, steep and abrupt in its philosophism, which we have been climbing since the Estates General were convened; Alongside this Constitution, we can see the Declaration of Rights rising painfully, a real coche, so heavy and ungracious is it!

There's a bizarre assemblage in the hall and galleries of this National Assembly, as around the coach: women, monks, old men!

The carriage was sweating, puffing, rendered; and so was the Assembly! Read the minutes of the sessions devoted to the painful progress of the Declaration from May to the end of August, and you'll see how much the Assembly sweated...

And the fly appears... Is it Grégoire, priest of Emberménil? Or is it the Jewish question? For if Grégoire is in a hurry, the Jewish question is in a hurry to succeed. What's certain is that such a fly in the National Assembly, in the year 1789, was not completely harmless!

After a great deal of hard work, the bell arrived at the top: the Declaration! And Grégoire was delighted for his Judean flock.

III

The sons of Israel who gravitated around Gregory were of several kinds. First, there are the six Jews who have officially come from Alsace, Lorraine, Metz and the Trois-Évêchés. Behind these envoys, most of the Jews of these provinces are waiting and making vows. Then there's the famous Cerfberr, who is fighting and on trial with the city of Strasbourg: this one is a real power, thanks to its gold, its credit and its relations with the great and the philosophers. Last but not least, there were the Jews of Paris, still few in number at the time; there were scarcely 500 of them in the capital, but their ideas were very advanced. These various clans of Hebrews were unanimous in pressing the issue and hastening the outcome. Jews in neighboring countries, let alone those in other parts of the world, are completely unaware of the attempt being made on their behalf, namely the civil rights being sought for them; they are asleep, slumbering as they have been for centuries around the sepulchre of their freedom. But there's no doubt that they'll adhere to the great jolt that will awaken them; for they'll find a way to prove to them that the ancient wonders of Israel's entry into the Promised Land will be renewed for them, when the emissaries sent to explore it returned with fruits of extraordinary size, and a bunch of grapes carried by two men on their shoulders. This prospect of big profits will inflame their descendants, the leaders have no doubt!

What was it, then, that determined the Jews of Alsace, of Paris, and above all personalities like Gerfberr, to put the Declaration of Rights to immediate use, to waste no time, to the extent that the last article of the Declaration was voted on August 26, and that, on that same August 26, the Jews residing in Paris presented an address to the National Assembly to obtain civil rights; what was it, then, that excited them

to make haste in this way?

Two things: the storm brewing in Alsace against the region's Jews, and the impatience of hearts embittered by outrage and misfortune. Let's explain this haste:

In Alsace, the position of Jewish families was no longer tenable. We have recounted elsewhere the unheard-of episode of the forged receipts: How the peasants of Alsace's Sundgau region had been lured by blasters into forging false receipts to pay off their debts to usurious Jews; and how Louis XVI's government, justly ashamed of such an act by Christians, and no less justly alarmed by the usurious and oppressive behavior of the Jews, had hastened to intervene, either to repair the injustice of some, or to curb the usury of others². The Sovereign Council of Colmar was seized of the matter.

1 Book of Numbers, chap. xm. 24-28.

s See [*Entrée des Israélites dans la Satiété française*, livre II. chap. n.

of the case. A major trial had taken place. After verification, the claims of the Jews on the Christians amounted to 10,757,161 francs, from which had to be deducted the bad debts, the lapsed claims and their passive debts. On August 28, 1787, the Colmar court had handed down a ruling setting out the terms and conditions under which Jewish creditors of Christians could demand partial repayment of their claims, the titles of which had been recognized by the courts. It was thought, therefore, that this lamentable affair was over. 11 was not. The fabrication of false receipts continued. But what was more serious, in August 1789, at the very time when castles were being burned and farms looted in various parts of France, Alsace had been the scene of delirious and frenzied scenes. In more than twenty villages, the peasants had pounced on the Jews: "Their houses were ransacked; their money and belongings looted; they fled half-naked, taking refuge by the hundreds in Basel, where they were received and treated charitably. The clerks' offices were violated, in order to destroy all their claims against the Christians⁵³. - The expelled Jews returned to their homes before the end of September, where they are camped rather than housed. They must thank God for the mild weather this winter*, without which many of them would have died of cold, having found neither doors, nor windows, nor furnaces in their homes. The Christians everywhere have welcomed them with open arms; they seem ashamed of the violence they have committed*. In one village, however, Uffholtz, the Jews had continued to suffer such abuse that it had become necessary to call on the protection of bayonets for their safety: a detachment of troops was permanently stationed there². And that was that. But with their practical sense, our Hebrews soon realized that no protection would be worth that of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which was being drafted by the National Assembly, and that if they were recognized as citizens, they would be covered in a more effective and lasting way. That's why the good Curé Grégoire, in agreement with them, was pressing for the completion of the tutelary legislation with his fly's sting or his shepherd's crook; and that's why, too, the last article of the Declaration of Rights had not yet been voted on when our Jews, impatient to be protected, were already demanding its first application for themselves.

Their impatience was further fuelled by another cause: they were tired of being the whipping boys; their gall bladders had burst.

In peoples, as in individuals, there is a gall bladder that fills up, and when it ruptures, the result is storms of the heart: these are the most terrible! Of all the causes that led to the French Revolution, this was perhaps the most real. It was neither taxes, nor the abuses of authority, nor the vexations of intendants, nor the ruinous delays of justice that had most irritated the nation, but rather

1 Rapport lu, etc., p. 10.

2 Ibid, p. 11, 12.

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little people threw themselves into them with more avidity than anyone else. In his study of *Y Ancien Régime*, M. Taine has strongly presented this irritation of the middle and lower classes, and supported it with anecdotes that will serve to make clear what we have to say about the storms of the heart among the Jews:

"At the Grenoble theater, Barnave as a child was with his mother in a box that the Duc de Tonnerre, governor of the province, had intended for one of his supporters. The theater director, then the officer on guard, came to ask Madame Barnave to withdraw: she refused; by order of the governor, four riflemen arrived to force her to do so. The audience was already taking sides, and violence was feared, when M. Barnave, aware of the affront, came to take his wife away and said loudly: "Je sors par ordre du gouverneur" ("I'm leaving by order of the governor"). The public, the entire indignant bourgeoisie, undertook not to return to the show until they were satisfied, and indeed, the theater remained empty for several months, until Madame Barnave consented to reappear. The future deputy later remembered the outrage, and from then on, vowed "to raise the caste, and to make it a reality".

1 At the beginning of the reign of Louis XVI, a traveler returning home after a few years' absence, and asked what change he noticed in the nation, replied: "Nothing else, except that what is said in the salons is repeated in the streets. And what is repeated in the streets is Rousseau's doctrine, the *Discourse on Inequality*, the *Social Contract* amplified, popularized and repeated by disciples in every tone and form. Rousseau's philosophy was to "free the society to which it belonged, from the humiliation to which it seemed condemned.

"Similarly Lacroix, the future Conventionnel, pushed out of the theater by a gentleman giving his arm to a pretty woman, complains aloud, "Who are you? - Who are you?" - He, still a provincial, has the good-naturedness to parade his first and last names and qualities throughout. - Well," says the other, "it's very well done to you for being all that; as for me, I'm the Count de Chabannes, and I'm in a great hurry." With that, "laughing inordinately," he climbed back into the carriage. "Ah, Monsieur," said Lacroix, still hot from his misadventure, "the awful distance that pride and prejudice put between men!" "You can be sure that in Marat, a surgeon in the stables of the Count of Artois, in Robespierre, a protégé of the Bishop of Arras, in Danton, a small-time lawyer in Mery-sur-Seine, in all the others, in twenty encounters, self-esteem had bled likewise. Thanks to Rousseau, vanity, so natural in man, so sensitive in a Frenchman, became more sensitive. The slightest nuance, a tone of voice, seemed a mark of disdain. One day, while speaking before the Minister of War, about a general officer who had reached that rank through merit: "Ah, yes," said the Minister, "a general officer of fortune!" This word was repeated, commented on, and did a lot of harm.

"At the Duc de Penthièvre, the nobles ate with the master of the house, the commoners dined with his first gentleman and only came to the salon for coffee. There, they find the others who have had the honor of dining with His Highness "in force and with a high tone", and who do not fail to greet the newcomers with a protective complacency. That's enough; no matter how hard the duke tries, Beugnot, so pliant, has no desire to return. We hold a grudge against them, not only for the too-short saints they make, but also for the too-large reverences we make for them.

"When the heart is revolted, it resents everything. Following Rousseau's example, the Third Estate resents the nobles for everything they do, and even more for everything they are, for their luxury, their elegance, their banter, their fine and brilliant manners. Their coldness as well as their familiarity, their attentions as well as their inattentiveness are offenses, and, under these millions of pinpricks, real or imaginary, the gall pocket fills up.

"In 1789, it's full and it's going to burst.

Well, a similar moral phenomenon is occurring among the Jewish people, at the very moment when the commoner classes of France are setting them an example. After nearly two thousand years of suffering, is

it any wonder that, when announcements of liberty and equality penetrate to the Jewish heartland, their suffering pride rises again, and their old blood, which quivered at Sinai and animated the Machabees, bubbles again? In him too, the pocket of gall has filled, and is breaking.

They are weary of the contemptuous terms that the laws authorize against them in proceedings. The cahiers des

1 Taine, *l'Ancien Régime*, p. 417–20. handed to the parish priest of Emberménil by the Garde des Sceaux, contain this grievance and request: "That all public figures be forbidden to use scurrilous epithets against Jews in pleadings, deeds, service of documents¹", etc. They are tired of being a source of contempt for the Jews.

They are tired of being a source of wealth for the lords. "These unfortunate people can't settle anywhere without the lord's permission, who sells it at whatever price he wants. They pay him an annual protection fee. And the young Jew, when he marries, is still obliged to pay the tax that the lord imposes on him, to have permission to settle in the village where he was born^{54 55}!"

Cerfberr, so enduring, is weary of the interminable opposition of Strasbourg's magistrates to the right conferred on him by Louis XVI, as a reward for his services, to reside in Strasbourg as a free man ⁵⁶. His last supplication to His Majesty reveals his deep irritation: "Thus, the magistrates of Strasbourg refuse Your Majesty the right to reward the suppliant in the place where he has had the honor of serving Your Majesty. What! the royal authority, which has so much power to punish crime, has none to reward service! Isn't it strange to see a Jew stipulating the interests of the State! And why not? Since the government has stipulated these interests with him ⁵⁷!"

The Jews of Strasbourg are tired of being turned away and dismissed from the city every evening at the sound of the horn, and of being forced to sleep in the surrounding villages¹. The sound of this horn, which means: "Out with the Jews! What an outpouring of gall in these lines: "We hope that the new municipality of Strasbourg will no longer allow a daily opportunity to frighten children, to tell them impertinent fables, to sow in their hearts the seeds of hatred, which develop through education, take root and become indestructible : I'm talking about that odious horn, the mournful sound of which is heard every evening at the start of the night, from the top of the cathedral, and strikes terror into the souls of all those whose ears are not accustomed to it. The prejudices with which the people of Strasbourg are imbued, their blind hatred of the Jews, owe their origin in large part to the impression made on children by the sound of this horn, and to the ridiculous stories they have been told, the tradition of which is still religiously preserved² ".

And so, what storms of the heart long contained, about those terms of contempt used in proceedings, those heavy taxes to be paid to the lords, those shameful tolls, those daily expulsions, that odious horn! Long contained, they erupt, along with similar storms in the hearts of commoners, on the date of 1789: and this explains why, as soon as the discussion on human rights seems to be coming to an end, our Jews are already

1 See *Entrée des Israélites*, etc., part one, chap. vi.

2 Report read in Strasbourg, etc., p. 26–7.

there, at the door of the Assembly, in Gregory's ear, whispering: Press, press the denouement!

IV t

To succeed, what plan of operation was adopted? The following; – not that we have found it spelled out in any document, but it emerges clearly from the documents we are about to read:

First line of operation. – As the Jews of Alsace are very poorly regarded by public opinion, due to their multiplied usury, which has led to the ruin of so many unfortunate farmers, it is the Jews of Paris who have drafted, and are presenting to the National Assembly, the request by which they ask to be admitted to the number of citizens.

The reasoning behind their request is very simple: they are men, they are, by their conduct, irreproachable, worthy of another fate: therefore they must be citizens.

Wouldn't the confident tone in which their address to the deputies is written suggest that they were aware of the starting and ending points of this famous Declaration of Rights? Let us judge: "Without doubt, and we like to think so, your justice did not ask to be solicited, nor prevented by our wishes. In restoring man to his original dignity, in re-establishing him in the enjoyment of his rights, you did not intend to make any distinction between one man and another.

This title belongs to us as it does to all other members of society; the rights deriving from it therefore belong to us equally. This is the reassuring consequence of the fundamental principles you have just established. We are therefore certain that our existence will be different from the one to which we have been devoted until now. The title of man guarantees us that of citizen; and the title of citizen will give us all the rights of citizenship, all the civil faculties, which we see enjoyed, alongside us, by the members of a society of which we are a part *." Doesn't such an assurance of language presuppose prior, in-depth knowledge of what was in store? Would men on the sidelines of society, had they not been aware (behind the scenes) of the drafting, purpose and scope of the Bill of Rights, have presented such confident conclusions on August 26, the very evening the Bill was voted on? Isn't ignorance accompanied by more timidity and reserve, especially in the first steps?

The Jews of Paris, in demanding their admission to the ranks of citizens, based on the one hand on human rights, and on the other on "their submission to the laws of which they had given such a constant example, their ardent love for the monarch, their peaceful character^{58 59}", in a word on their irreproachable conduct, had no doubt forgotten the recriminations and reproaches of which they had been the object under the previous reign. A petition from the six bodies of Paris merchants, addressed to His Majesty King Louis XV, argued that the admission of Jews would be directly contrary to His Majesty's desire to make commerce increasingly flourish; it contained these words: "Not only are they incapable of bringing it the slightest advantage, but they can only desolate and ruin it.... The admission of this kind of man into a political society can only be very dangerous. They can be compared to wasps, which enter hives only to kill the bees, open their bellies and extract the honey... To allow a single Jew to trade in a city is to allow all of them to trade there, and to oppose each trader with the forces of an entire nation: they are particles of quicksilver which run, which stray, and which at the slightest incline are reunited in a main block¹". The Jews of Paris, inebriated by the Revolution that had begun humanity anew, no doubt forgot this past. So true is it that the desire to appear transformed often produces, in the sinner who makes amends, the illusion that his transformation has already been achieved!

So here's the first line of operation: among the Jews, it's those in Paris who submit an address to the National Assembly asking to be recognized as citizens.

Second line of operation: the Jews of Alsace pro-...

¹ Archives nationales, ADIB xxvn, n° 26, Requête des marchands et négociants de Paris contre l'admission des juifs, pages 19, 245, 28.

BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ¹¹⁵ the Alsatians to resemble their co-religionists in Paris. Indeed, while their co-religionists worked to succeed with the National Assembly, the Jews of Alsace, for their part, tried to soften and conciliate the Alsatian people. As a counterpart to the former's Address to the National Assembly, an Address from Alsatian Jews to the people of Alsace appeared. A coup stir, one had to rub one's eyes in Strasbourg, Colmar, and especially in the Sundgau, when reading the following:

a) Beginning:

"Citizens, we expect the National Assembly to issue a decree favorable to our hopes; but before doing

so, we wish to reassure you about the worries and fears it may raise in your minds. Please do not think that we will ever abuse it. If you were to judge what we will one day be by what we have been up to now, your error would be great, and you are too wise to adopt it. Be persuaded, on the contrary, that men are, in general, only what we want them to be, and that we have been forced to have the defects and faults that some of us are reproached with⁶⁰."

b) Promise to be like the Jews of Paris:

"The capital of the kingdom, at this time, is making a solemn approach to the National Assembly, to bear authentic witness in favor of the Jews established within its walls, and to express at the same time the desire that all those of the State participate in the same benefit.... Once again, do not despair of seeing a salutary revolution take place in our customs, when the example of the Jews of Paris, to whom no reproach is made, is a sure guarantee of the truth of the promises we dare to make to you h".

c) But they don't let go of their claims:

"Citoyens I lorsque nous aurons obtenu de F Assemblée nationale le décret que nous attendons de sa sagesse, daignez donc y applaudir.

"We have claims on you; these claims are considerable, but you have been granted very remote terms by a decree of the Sovereign Council of Colmar, dated 1787, to liquidate your claims against us.

"Would it be because of these debts that you could see with displeasure our admission to the title of citizens? Would you be less in debt? And would the time for payment come later, if we did not obtain the act of justice that the National Assembly cannot refuse us 2?

11 It must be admitted that for people who had seen the roofs of their houses torn off, and who had been hounded, as we said, in more than twenty villages, it was not a little impudent and foolhardy to speak to the Alsatians in this way. So the combined plan of the Hebrews of Paris and the Hebrews of Alsace hardly succeeded. The National Assembly did not seem to notice, let alone be moved, by

1 Adresse des juifs alsaciens au peuple d'Alsace, p. 4.

2 Ibid, p. 5-G.

Alsace, on reading the address of the latter, was all the more exasperated. As for the six Jewish deputies who had come to Versailles and surrounded Grégoire, they had continued to languish for several months on the threshold of the Assembly, without ever having been able to enter its precincts L

V

Grégoire, however, had not entirely lost his wits. Since the horrible day of October 6th at Versailles 2, the Assembly has been humiliated, dismayed and discouraged: one hundred and twenty members have deserted its benches. It was in these dire circumstances, and at the penultimate session held in Versailles, that Grégoire finally managed to get the Jewish deputation from Lorraine, Alsace and the Trois-Evêchés to present its request. This took place on October 14. At the evening session, the six Jews who made up the deputation were admitted to the bar of F Assemblée. More astute than their co-religionists from Paris and Alsace, whose addresses had wounded them with their haughty claims, they came forward with a clear and unambiguous message.

1 Motion en faveur des juifs, by Grégoire, notice historique, p. 12.

A despicable crowd had made its way from Paris to Versailles. The Assembly, in session, had been insulted, then defiled by people who spent the night there. At dawn, the château had been invaded, the apartments where the queen slept besieged by a ferocious mob, two bodyguards killed, and their heads placed at the head of the foul procession that took the king and queen from Versailles to Paris.

A request whose wording leaves nothing to be desired. Their president, Berr-Isaac-Berr, speaks in these terms:

Messeigneurs,

"It is in the name of the Eternal, author of all justice and truth, in the name of this God who, in giving

everyone the same rights, has prescribed the same duties for all; it is in the name of humanity, outraged for so many centuries by the ignominious treatment to which the unfortunate descendants of the most ancient of all peoples have been subjected in almost every corner of the earth, that we come today to beseech you to kindly take into consideration their deplorable destiny.

"Persecuted everywhere, debased everywhere, yet always submissive, never rebellious, the object of indignation and contempt among all peoples, when they should only have been the object of tolerance and pity, the Jews whom we represent at your feet have allowed themselves to hope that, in the midst of the important work in which you are engaged, you will not despise their complaints, you will listen with some interest to the timid complaints they dare to make in the midst of the profound humiliation in which they are buried.

"We will not abuse your moments, My Lords, to discuss the nature and justice of our demands; they are recorded in the memoirs that we have the honor of placing before your eyes. May we owe you a less painful existence than that to which we are condemned! May the veil of opprobrium that has covered us for so long be lifted.

DEVANT L'ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE 119 long, be torn from our heads at last! May men look upon us as their brothers! May that ciivine charity,' which is so particularly recommended to you, also extend to us! May an absolute reform take place in the ignominious institutions to which we are enslaved, and may this reform, so far too uselessly desired, which we solicit with tears in our eyes, be your benefit and your work!"

This humble, pleading language could not help but move us. And so, M. de Fréteau, President de Quinzaine, replies:

"The great motives that you make A'aloir in support of your requests, do not allow the National Assembly to hear them without interest; it will take your request into consideration and will find itself happy to recall your brothers to tranquility and happiness, and provisionally you can inform your constituents h "

The reply was vague in its benevolence. But Grégoire was there, having learned from a good school what it means to be positive. On the spot, he stood up and said:

"Given that the matter of the Jews cannot be postponed for a fixed term, I ask that they be promised, at the very least, to deal with it in the course of the present session 61 62."

The request was granted by the Assembly, "despite the complaints of some people whom I am very happy not to know", wrote Grégoire 63.

VI

The Assembly moved to the Salle du Manège in Paris, where it has held its sessions for the past two months. In the sessions of December 21, 23 and 24, the Jewish affair was officially called. It was Christmas Eve!

The anniversary of the coming into this world of the Liberator was thus chosen by divine Providence, to introduce before the peoples the cause of the emancipation or liberation of the ancient people of God.

The French Chamber took no notice, nor, to all appearances, did it remember the outrage to the Divinity which, shortly before, the Moniteur had recorded in its columns by comparing the night of the 4th to the sacred night of the Redeemer of the world. We reported this above. 11 is worth recalling here the most poignant features:

- In one night, the face of France changed;
- In one night, the famous tree of feudalism, whose shadow covered the whole of France, was uprooted;
- In one night, man took back the place marked out for him by nature and reason;
- In one night, the long enterprises of the court of Rome, its abuses, its greed, have found an end and

an insurmountable barrier that wisdom and human reason have just laid down for all eternity;

- In one night, France has been saved and regenerated.

1 Moniteur, 1789, 11° 38.

Perhaps it was to punish this sacrilegious contrast that Divine Providence called the question of the emancipation of its ancient people on Christmas Eve. There's still only an almost imperceptible point of light, but it will grow!

And so, all is indecisive and complex in the return of this people, it's a twilight; one can distinguish in it the battles of mercy and justice. While his cause was being called on Christmas Eve, on the other hand, a funereal figure was appearing at his side, claiming civil rights like him, and in the same session: the executor of high works!

In the old society, the deprivation of civil rights affected many categories of people, including: Jews, Protestants, actors and the executioner; Jews and Protestants, because their beliefs were in opposition to the fundamental laws and customs of the country; actors and the executioner, because they exercised professions deemed infamous.

In the sessions of December 21, 23 and 24, these four categories of incapacitated people appeared together, and on the same line, before the National Assembly, to claim civil rights.

How could this assemblage of Jews and executioners not be of interest to us? Israelite historians have made a mystery of it in their memoirs!

And so, the executor of the high works came forward, too, to obtain his rehabilitation. A few days earlier, in that same month of December, the instruments of torture that form his domain had been transformed and perfected; he had come to ask to be transformed himself! Here, according to the documents of the time, is how this double funeral transformation was proposed and adopted, that of the instruments and that of the executioner. We enclose, for the benefit of our former co-religionists, a few reflections, always submitted with respect, especially in such matters!

Transformation of instruments of torture. - In the session of December 1, 1789, Doctor Guillotin read a long speech on the reform of the penal code, of which the Moniteur has not seen fit to retain a single word. It was in this speech that he proposed to decree that there would be only one kind of punishment for capital crimes; to replace the executioner's arm with the action of a machine, the machine we now call the guillotine. With my machine," said Guillotin, "I'll blow your head off in the blink of an eye, and you won't suffer. The Assembly laughed. But it listened attentively to the rest of the report, which ended with the following proposals:

Art. I. - Offenses of the same kind will be punished by the same type of penalty, whatever the rank or status of the guilty party.

Art. II - In all cases where the law pronounces the death penalty against an accused person, the punishment will be the same; the criminal will be decapitated. He will be decapitated by a simple mechanism*.

Doctor Guillotin, deputy from Taris, was a skilled physician and the gentlest of men. It was out of a sense of humanity that he proposed beheading to the

1 Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française, by Bûchez and Roux, t. III, p. 4'17-8. .

and thus "the name of a good man was given to this instrument of death of such execrable fame *".

Let our ancient co-religionists now reflect on the following comparison:

The Christian world, nearly two thousand years ago, and the revolutionary world, a century ago, opened with two famous, thought-crushing transformations: the cross and the guillotine.

In ancient times, the cross was considered an infamous piece of wood; in Rome and almost everywhere else, only slaves and the vilest malefactors were tortured by the cross. All of a sudden, this instrument of torture was transformed: precious stones adorned it with envy, all jewels gave it pride of place, and it

even became part of the diadem of kings! And not only is this instrument of torment transfigured, but even more extraordinarily, it transfigures the world. The old virtues take refuge under its shadow, where they blossom anew, and new ones blossom there, of marvelous beauty: humility, chastity, charity, the heroism of martyrdom! The radiance of this cross becomes so superb that it surpasses that of the sun: the star of the day, in its course, illuminates only one hemisphere at a time, the rays of the cross envelop all the other hemispheres.

1 Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, chap. vm. – Guillolin, who had been guided only by a love of humanity, soon realized the harm he had unwittingly done, and cursed his work. He spoke out energetically against the excesses of the Terror, was imprisoned and, had it not been for the 9th of Thermidor, would have been executed. He spent the rest of his life in retirement. It was he who came up with the idea of the medical association that became the Académie de Médecine.

worlds! When we say of a bold navigator that he went to plant the cross on foreign shores, everyone will understand that, on those shores, he went to introduce and begin civilization. In all civilized kingdoms, it becomes the sign of national honor and reward. And finally, when Bossuet wants to praise, before the most magnificent court in the universe, the way of life that takes precedence over all others, he will say of a princess: Now she prefers the cross to the throne. 4 >

Such is the transformation that marked the genesis of the Christian world.

The revolutionary world, as it opened up, also wanted to have its own, also inherent in an instrument of torture: the guillotine.

What else could be used to celebrate the birth of this sepulchral mechanism, these "woods of justice", as they are known today? They were erected on the Place de la Révolution in the name of a country in danger. The knife fell to the cry of Vive la Nation! In its impious and savage ambition to ape the popularity and spread of the cross, the revolutionary intoxication went so far as to have multitudes of little guillotines made, toys for children, ornaments for the home*. Some people, touched by the guillotine's good services, presented sums of money for its upkeep 2! On the other hand, the most touching scenes took place at the foot of the guillotine.

1 "Children's toys were little bird guillotines. Chateaubriand, *Essay on English Literature*, Part IV. s *Moniteur*, n° 198.

of this instrument of torment: the young girl and the young woman suddenly became as great as devotion, as sublime as martyrdom; the old man regretted having to give only a remnant of his life, in testimony to his faith; almost all of them climbed the steps of the scaffold, pointing to heaven and forgiving their executioners. "There was an hour of anguish, the evening hour, when the messenger of revolutionary justice arrived to designate the prisoners who, the next day, were to appear before the tribunal; relatives and friends took each other by the hand, and, by an instinct of self-preservation, leaned against each other. Hearts were torn asunder at the farewells. "4 But in the presence of the scaffold, resignation, calm and hope quickly regained their hold, and from the altar of sacrifice, legions of angels ascended to heaven2!

Why is it, however, that, notwithstanding these touching scenes, and contrary to the hymns of

1 Poujoulat, *Histoire de la Révolution française*.

1 A few examples among a thousand. Sixteen Carmelites from Royallieu, near Compiègne, made their way to the executioner, singing the Salve Regina. How touching their voices must have been when they said: Eia ergo advjcata nostra! The angelic concert continued right up to the foot of the scaffold, and did not cease altogether until the final blow of the axe.

Twenty peasant women from Poitou were advancing towards death; one of them was breast-feeding her child; she would have liked to give him all the life she was about to lose; when she reached the foot of the scaffold, her child was torn from her breast!... Former servants of royalty, women who had known

the festivities of Versailles, were placed in Madame Elisabeth's carriage. The pious, irreproachable princess took the place of the priest for her fellow sufferers, and was the angel of their last hour. Her companions had the consolation of embracing her; each condemned man, as he dismounted from the carriage, respectfully saluted the princess before ascending to the scaffold. We know of no scene of more touching grandeur. Madame Elisabeth was the last to perish. She was 30 years old. Poujollat, *Histoire de la Révolution*.

How is it that, during the Revolution, the guillotine became an object of abhorrence, while the cross continued to shine pure and bright?

Why is it that, in front of the instrument of torture on the platform of Golgotha, generations have passed on and on, bowing in admiration and love, while in front of the instrument of torture on the Place de la Révolution, they have bowed their heads in fear and horror?

Of the two instruments of torment, one was deemed more infamous, and that was the cross! Indeed, out of respect for his title as a Roman citizen, Saint Paul was only beheaded, while Saint Peter was crucified. How is it that no one has ever found strange the cry of admiration and eagerness that St Andrew uttered towards the instrument of his torture? As soon as he saw it, he cried out: "O cross, O good cross, you who have become so beautiful, you after whom I have long sighed, you whom I have so ardently loved, you whom I have so persistently sought, and whom my impatience finally finds prepared, receive me, take me from among men to return me to my divine Master, so that through you I may be received by Him who through all has redeemed me!" Who ever thought of uttering a similar cry towards the guillotine? And why is it that, in order to know how to die under the guillotine knife, every condemned man, innocent or guilty, needs, at the foot of the scaffold, to kiss the cross?

1 Roman Breviary.

2 Here is one of the highest spectacles on earth: at the two corners of this scaffold, the two justices are in presence, human justice and divine justice: the one, implacable and leaning on a sword, is accompanied by despair; the other, holding a cross drenched with tears, shows herself

Saint John Chrysostom said to the people of Constantinople: "Who among you would touch the fatal instruments of the death of criminals? On the contrary, who does not abhor them? And who would not feel dishonored if forced to keep some part of the gallows where they were hung? Who among us would want to keep in his home, and show to his visitors, one of the pieces of wood where the guillotine knife was hung? Why, on the contrary, do we feel a sense of joy in possessing, and a movement of honor in showing, a piece of the wood of the true cross?"

Where do these profound differences come from? Where do these striking oppositions come from?

They have tormented my thoughts; they will cause similar torment in anyone who will reflect. They cannot be explained without a major reason. Let your most learned rabbis rise up, O Israel, and give you this explanation! I adjure them to speak. For my part, I opened our old Bible at the words of Isaiah:

"We have looked upon him; he was the man of sorrows; he bore the iniquity of us all.... He will be displayed like a standard before all the peoples; the nations will come to offer him their prayers, and his tomb will be glorious"; then, satisfied with this ray of light and closing the Bible, I said to myself: here is the reason for the senti-

between pity and hope; one ministers to a man of blood, the other to a man of peace; one condemns, the other absolves; innocent or guilty, the first says to the victim: "Die! The second cries out: "Sons of innocence or of repentance, ascend to heaven." Chateaubriand. *Génie du Christianisme*.

1 Saint Chrysostom, lib. *Quod Christus sit Deus*, c. ix.

2 Isaïe, chap. lui et xi.

the cross and the guillotine:

Under the guillotine, the victims, however holy and innocent, were mere creatures;

On the cross, the victim was the Son of God!

This is why the cross is sought after, infinitely multiplied, glorified, adored; God reigned through the wood, regnavit a ligne Deus 641

VII

In the same month of December 1789, these different coincidences were grouped together: Doctor Guillotin had his invention accepted; the executor of high works, having seen the instruments of torture transformed, came, in his turn, to request his own transformation through the demand for civil rights; finally, the Jews met at the bar of the Assembly with him, for the same object.

The Israelite historians who report on this session mention the request for rehabilitation for actors, Protestants and Jews; but all are silent on the executioner's participation in the same request. It is, however, recorded throughout, along with the other three, in the Moniteur, and we even shudder when we see, in the official report, among the deputies who rise to the podium to

DEVANT L'ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE 129 to plead the cause of both the executioner and the Jews, who? Robespierre. Robespierre interceding on behalf of the executioner and the Jews, what a singular intercession! Here's part of his motion:

For the executioner: "It will never be said successfully, in this assembly, that a necessary function of the law can be flouted by the law. This law must be changed, and prejudice, no longer having any basis, will disappear, a

For the Jews: "You have been told things about the Jews that are infinitely exaggerated and often contrary to history. The vices of the Jews are born of the degradation into which you have plunged them; they will be good when they can find some advantage in being good... I believe, therefore, that they cannot be deprived of the sacred rights that the title of L man gives them".

These are the words and these are the facts. – Why, then, did the Israelite historians deem it appropriate to withhold the name of the executioner and cut him off from the group that presented itself for rehabilitation? Why? Ah, because the coincidence was too striking, too instructive, too eloquent, too overwhelming. The Jews appearing on stage with the executioner, what a reminder of the past, what memories! Wouldn't every child of Israel, on reading these lines, feel a trouble and unease that historians have tried to spare him^{65 66}?

Well, here's the outcome:

The collective request for rehabilitation

had been submitted to the Assembly on December 21st; it was discussed on the 23rd and 24th, and the result was this:

The executioner was rehabilitated, but not the Jews, and consideration of their fate was postponed¹.

Yes, this being "whose dwelling other dwellers flee from... who lives in a kind of void with his female and her young^{67 68}", this being now has his place in society; he will have the last, but he has one, and the people of Israel do not yet have one!... However, it would be a mistake to attribute to the legislators of 1789 a premeditated, Christian thought, when they put the executioner ahead of the Jews in the admission to the rights of citizenship. No religious motive guided their conduct when, on December 24, 1789, they rehabilitated the executioner and postponed the rehabilitation of the Jews. But Providence allowed that, since the Revolution wanted to systematically exclude Jesus Christ and forget the bloodstain on the forehead of the Jews in their rehabilitation trial, the bloodstain would suddenly reappear, by the fortuitous presence of the executioner next to the Jews, and by the contrast of the rehabilitation of one with the postponement of the others. Many of the deputies had to make this thought.

For those of us who have unearthed this detail, hitherto carefully shrouded in shadow and silence, and who feel it our duty to bring it to light after a century of oblivion, we shall accompany it with this

admission that impartial truth commands us: The day of December 24, 1789 was profoundly humiliating for our race, but it was a day of sublime justice! Yes, the executioner deserved to be rehabilitated before us; for the executioner only puts guilty men to death, and we had put the Son of God, the innocent, to death! It's a good thing, Lord, that you humbled us* Oh, may this penitential thought, which we have traced against Israelite pride, touch your mercy, O Father of Jesus Christ, and count for the conversion of our brothers in Israel!

The Israelites were deeply wounded. The written proof of this has also remained. A few days after the adjournment, one of the most widely-read Jewish-supporting newspapers in Paris published the following words, a veritable explosion of anger and disgust: "At a time when the rights of man are recognized; at a time when the vilest of beings, covered at all times in the mud of infamy, has had the audacity to make its sinister voice heard in the courts (the executioner), how is it possible that the Jews, this ancient people that prejudice alone has striven to debase, still need defenders? Why is it that God's people, degraded by humiliating insults, are forced to descend to prayer to obtain justice?

1 Psalm of David. V quality of man: quality of man that we don't deny to one of those infamous creatures whose existence we only forgive because a stepmother nature has allowed crimes and toads to exist *."

What language!

Such was the episode of the meeting between the executioner and the Jews at the bar of the Assembly.

1 Le Courier de Paris clans les provinces et des provinces à Paris, n° xxv (February 2, 1790), p 3S9-9J.

CHAPTER V

THE FACE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

IN THE QUESTION OF JEWISH EMANCIPATION. ITS ANXIETAS.

IT HESITATES

DURING THE TWO YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE

TO ISSUE A DECREE

(1789-1791)

I Ideological, theatrical and presumptuous. the National Assembly (now the Constituent Assembly) suddenly found itself faced with a practical fact, the most serious and obscure in its consequences: the admission and fusion of Jews into society. - II. Her embarrassment, she becomes concerned and thoughtful. Remarkably, this was the only question that preoccupied, and even wearied, the Constituante during its entire existence, from 1789 to 1791. -111. Partisans of the Jews within the Assembly: opponents; partisans M ppartiennent tous aux loges maçonniques; preuve. - IV. Some portraits of deputies in relation to the Jewish question. Mirabeau: how to explain his attachment to the Jews. -V. The constitutional priest Grégoire, their most zealous servant; his smugness and short-sighted, dangerous views on the Jewish question: his efforts to have emancipation decreed on the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Day. - VI. Abbé Maury: fighting emancipation as an athlete of the past. -VII. Rewbell. their most bitter adversary; Alsace supports him with its complaints and anger against the usurers. Last protection of Louis X\ I. - VIII. Increasing hesitation of the Assembly before the decree to be issued; it resumes and adjourns the question up to fourteen times. - IX. Reasons for these hesitations: not at all religious. What must have been going on inside many deputies. Their official silence in the face of this painful contrast: the voted exit of Christ, the imminent entry of the Jews.

I

What, then, was the value of this Assembly, to which the Israelites had to devour such affronts from the outset?

Let us note, in passing, that the Assembly has changed its name. It is now called the Constituante, because of the constitution that France is awaiting, and for which the Declaration of the Rights of Man

was the preface.

A wide variety of judgments have been made about the Constituent Assembly, dictated by the points of view from which they came. We ask permission to present our own, provided by the emancipation of the Jewish people, which the Constituent Assembly had to deal with. It's a complement that may well be of interest, and perhaps cast a new light on the famous Assembly.

We say of the Constituent Assembly: that it was generous, very generous, for the Israelites, but against its will; that it showed itself to be worried and serious, very worried and very serious, in the examination of this question; and that it was sovereignly short-sighted and imprudent in its solution, but in a fatal way, by virtue of the principles it had proudly proclaimed and which it had to undergo in this circumstance.

We are convinced that, after reading the chapters that follow, many readers will share our view.

Let us first determine the historical background or physiognomy of F Assemblée at the time when the question of Jewish emancipation was introduced before it. We have already had occasion to point out that, when we want to judge a person or a society from the past, we need to reconstruct its environment, i.e. all the dispositions it presented at the time of its existence. ¹¹ It was easy for us to reconstruct the historical milieu of the Constituent Assembly, thanks to A.I. Taine: *Les Origines de la France contemporaine; la Révolution*.

Some books are providential. This is certainly one of them. The author reveals what the Constituent Assembly was like, not just according to more or less legendary accounts, but according to original and indisputable documents, numbered and fortunately discovered by him in the National and Departmental Archives. These details shed light on the Assembly's physiognomy. Its actions are presented with order, clarity and a relentless light; it's almost like the Prophet's *Scrulabor Jérusalem in lucernis*: "I will carry the light of the lamps into the most hidden places of Jerusalem L" This book has been a good deed. We have relied on the author's impartiality to remake, with his burin, the milieu or true physiognomy of the Constituante.

Let us imagine:

1 Zephaniah, i, 12.

a) An ideological Assembly, convinced of the omnipotence of philosophy;

All that (the past) is backward; the century of reason has come and the Assembly is too enlightened to drag itself into routine... It operates in the manner of Rousseau, according to an abstract notion of law, the State and the social contract... Since principle, they legislate! you can guess what their discussions might be like. There are no hard facts, no precise arguments; you'd never guess that the people talking are there to settle real business... From speech to speech, the string of empty abstractions is prolonged and renewed ad infinitum, as in a conference of practicing rhetoric students" (Taine, *La Révolution*, t. I, p. 161).

b) An Assembly with no practical experience or knowledge of business;

If one looked hard enough, in 1789 one could find five or six hundred men of experience in France; first the intendants, then the principal members of the provincial assemblies, all people of sense and weight, having handled men and business... But most of these lights remain under a bushel; only a few reach the Assembly; they burn there without illuminating, and soon they are blown away by a stormy wind. Old Machanlt is not here, nor Malesherbes; not a steward... The vast majority is made up of unknown lawyers and subaltern lawyers, notaries, land registrars, bailiffs and bailiwick lieutenants, simple practitioners locked up since their youth in the narrow circle of a mediocre jurisdiction or paperwork routine, with no other escape than philosophical strolls through imaginary spaces under the guidance of Rousseau and Raynal... You might as well take eleven hundred notables from a province on dry land and entrust them with the repair of an old frigate; they will demolish it in good conscience, and the one they

build instead will sink before it leaves port. (Ibid., p. 154, 155, 156.)

c) A theatrical Assembly,

Us like emphases, big-band rhetoric, declamatory and sentimental eloquence: such is the style of almost all their speeches... Almost every session begins with the public reading of admiring addresses or threatening denunciations... The session is no longer a business conference, but a patriotic opera in which eclogue, melodrama and sometimes masquerade mingle amid clapping hands and bravos (Ibid., p. 151).

d) An overexcited Assembly;

To tell the truth, these are nervous women, and from one end of the Revolution to the other, their overexcitement will grow. Not only are they exalted, but they need exaltation. And, like a drinker who, once overheated, seeks out strong liquors, they seem to take it upon themselves to expel from their brains the last remnants of composure and common sense... Thus overexcited, they don't know in the morning what they'll do in the evening, and are at the mercy of every surprise. When enthusiasm seizes them, a vertigo runs through the benches: all prudence is disconcerted, all foresight disappears, all objections are stifled (Ibid., p. 150, 151).

e) A presumptuous Assembly, infatuated with its mission, doubting nothing:

The assembly had such a high opinion of itself, especially the left side, that it would have gladly taken on the task of making the Dildo of all nations.... Never had so many men imagined that they were all legislators and that they were there to repair all the aunts of the past, remedy all the errors of the human spirit and ensure the happiness of future centuries... It's impossible to paint the confusion of ideas, the derangement of imaginations, the burlesque of popular motions: you'd have thought the world was the day after creation. Indeed, they assume that human society does not exist and that they are in charge of creating it. There's no hesitation: they're convinced that the thing is easy, and that with two or three axioms of political philosophy .

(Ibid., p. 160 and p. 164-165).

Thanks to this set of quotations, we really have the historical background of the Constituante in 1789.

Thus: ideological, a novice in business, theatrical, impatient, unsure of anything, such was the physiognomy of the famous Assembly. We're not inventing any traits, just reproducing them. Besides the faults, there are the qualities: "The Assembly is made up of men who are young at heart, sincere, enthusiastic, generous even, and, what's more, diligent, hard-working, sometimes gifted with rare talents" (p. 162). However, while agreeing with these qualities, the implacable historian adds: "But neither zeal, nor work, nor talent are useful when they are not employed by a true idea: and, if they are put to the service of a false idea, they do all the more harm the greater they are" (p. 162). .

If we find the picture painted by M. Taine a little harsh, there's nothing to prevent us from tempering it with the shades of M. de Tocqueville:

I don't believe that at any time in history we have seen, on any part of the earth, such a number of men so sincerely passionate about the public good, so truly forgetful of themselves, so absorbed in the contemplation of the common interest. This was the incomparable grandeur of those first days of 1789. The spectacle was short-lived... It was only a moment; but I doubt that such a moment has ever been encountered in the life of any people (Tocqueville, t. VIT, Fragments d'histoire, p. 145, 147).

"It was only a moment, this spectacle was short!" . XL de Tocqueville is obliged to admit it; naturalness, with the procession of defects pointed out by XL Taine, soon spoiled everything. Why did this happen? Because underneath this real, undeniable foundation of selflessness, courage and devotion, the fundamental stone - Christ - had, alas, been removed!

So there you have the Constituante, with its flaws and its generous aspirations.

Now imagine the question of the emancipation of the old Hebrew people suddenly arising in the midst of such an Assembly. Suddenly, if any issue was capable of offending the Assembly's way of being, it was

this one. In every aspect, it was the antithesis of the Constituante's provisions.

Indeed, this question presented, without question :

The most serious fact: a people, unsociable for 4,000 years, to be welcomed into society;

- and the Assembly was light, theatrical, almost a comedian;

The most practical fact: the Children of Israel are certainly practical! - and the Assembly was hardly practical;

The most obscure fact: what will come of this entry of the Jews into society? - and the Assembly was inspired only by philosophy.

Let's repeat: if there was one issue that was completely at odds, not with the ideas, but with the attitudes of the men of 1789, it was this one.

H

We must do the Constituent Assembly the justice of the fact that it found itself embarrassed, recognized its embarrassment, and became concerned and thoughtful before the solution it was being asked to find.

We recounted in the previous chapter how the rehabilitation of the Jews had been sought at her bar, along with that of the Protestants, the actors and the executioner, and how she had rehabilitated them all, even the executioner, by declaring that she felt she had to postpone the Jews. This postponement was an expression of her embarrassment.

This embarrassment would continue, and even be prolonged, for the entire duration of the Constituante's existence. It's a peculiarity that has gone unnoticed, and it's important to point it out.

Yes, something very singular, this Assembly that nothing surprised, that nothing stopped, ardent, thoughtless, presumptuous, suddenly felt uneasy, indecisive, weak, before a solution relating to the Jews. Of all the other questions, none embarrassed her; this one alone stopped her in her tracks, and even tired her, bothered her. On questions of public and natural law, she is said to have promulgated 3250 articles and decrees; but for the decree concerning the Jews, she would only draft it in pieces, at different times, and at considerable intervals. When it came to abolishing feudal rights, tithes and the privileges of individuals and provinces, the night of August 4 was enough. In twelve hours, the entire old order of the monarchy was overthrown. "But for the overthrow of the barriers that keep the Jews at bay, one year, two years, of hesitation and meditation, will not be enough, the whole duration of the Constituent Assembly will not be too long. It will only be in the last hour of its existence that the Assembly will decide to take a stand, and even then, it will have to be forced to do so! In short, it was the only question that bothered it, that stopped it in its tracks. The Constituante lasted a little over two years: from June 1789 to September 30, 1791; and the question of Jewish emancipation, officially introduced in December 1789, was not resolved until September 27, 1791: just three days before the separation of the Assembly.

11 It will be interesting to investigate, a few pages further on, the reason for this prolonged embarrassment.

But let's return to where we left off, which was the adjournment of December 24, 1789. The Protestants, the actors and the executioner were thus admitted to the enjoyment of civil rights. As for the Jews, the Assembly made the following provision: "that it did not intend to prejudge anything with regard to the rights of the Jews".

1 Taine, *La Révolution*,[^]. 150. on whose status it reserved the right to pronounce⁶⁹.

We had left it at that. Let's continue the story with accuracy.

III

For the account that follows, we had two options: either to report, one after the other, the sessions of the Constituent Assembly in which the Jews were discussed; or to present a few characters, a few portraits, taking care, however, to group around them what was important and interesting in the sessions.

We prefer the latter, as it is more striking and more likely to leave its mark on the reader's memory. First, here's how the Assembly divided on the question of the Jews. – It goes without saying that, of the 1118 deputies who made up the Constituante, we only cite the names of those who took some active part in the debates, for or against.

DEPUTIES WHO SUPPORTED THE JEWS

Names Sessions where they spoke.

Rahaud-Saint-Elie August 23, 1789.

De Castellane August 23, 1789.

Sessions where they spoke.

De Clermont-Tonnerre

Abbé Grégoire

Mounier

De Fréteau

Dcsmeuniers

Robespierre

Duport

Barnave

Mirabeau

De Talleyraud (bishop of Autun) . .

Vicomte de Noailles

De Fumel

Lechapelier

De Beauharnais

De Scze

Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt .

Rœderer

Vismes

Dumetz .

Régault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély. – .

Martineau

Vernier

The following also spoke in favor of the project:

–Siéyès, Necker, Camille Desmoulins, Target, Cahier de Cerville, Maréchal de Mouchy, de Saint-Priest, Lameth, Bergassc, d'Antraigues, Brevet de Beau- jour.

All these names were listed in the Moniteur as favo-
rables à l'émancipation juive. Now, there's a singular connection to be made:

Father Deschamps' truthful and learned book on secret societies contains the authentic list of members of the National Assembly who, in 1789, belonged to Masonic lodges. Well, all the names we have just enumerated, which appear in the Moniteur as having voted for the Jews, are to be found on the Masonic list revealed by Père Deschamps*. Isn't this coincidence proof that the Paris lodges were in favor of Jewish emancipation? In addition to this highly probable proof, based on names, we add hereafter (in the next chapter) the irrefragable proof based on facts.

DEPUTIES OPPOSED TO THE JEWS

Sessions where they spoke.

Rewbell

Abbé Maury

Mgr de la Fare, bishop of Nancy. ... Mgr Cortoisde Balore, bishop of Nîmes.

Prince de Broglie

1 Deschamps, *les Sociétés secrètes*, t. II, livre II, chap. vi, § 3: Composition des loges en 1789.

Mgr Fr. de Bonnal, bishop of Clermont. December 24, 1789.

(December 24, 1789.

De la Galissonniere < oo .

[January 28, 1790.

De Baumetz December 24, 1789.

Schwends (deputy of Alsace). ... January 29, 1790.

Fonstaing January 18, 1791.

Alquier January 18, 1791.

Folleville . January 18, 1791.

Nearly all the deputies from_1'Alsace were also among the opponents.

Among all the names on the two lists, four in particular shone in the discussion of the Jewish question:

Mirabeau, le curé Grégoire, l'abbé Maury, Rewbell. Their portraits, as auxiliaries or adversaries of the Jews, are extremely curious. They sum up the interest of most of the sessions.

Let's start with the Comte de Mirabeau:

IV

It has been said of Mirabeau "that he was the lion of the Revolution, with a powerful and terrible voice"; the comparison is apt, for those who came after him were its tigers.

It has also been said that "he gave himself to no party, but negotiated with all, and loved only himself".

This is still true.

Nevertheless, this giant, selfish nature did feel compassion, and it was for the Jews: just as we sometimes see a lion tolerate the company of a small, familiar dog in its dwelling!... It can be said that he sincerely loved them. 10 sincerely, he loved them. 11 There were several reasons for his affection: firstly, he loved them because of Mendelssohn.

Mendelssohn, of Jewish origin, had acquired a reputation in Berlin as the Socrates of Germany.

Mirabeau, during the secret diplomatic mission 1 he carried out in the Prussian capital in 1786-1788, was made aware of this simple, patriarchal existence that had just come to an end. Indeed, when he arrived in Berlin, Mendelssohn was no more. But he was able to appreciate the universal esteem in which the name and writings of the illustrious Israelite philosopher were held, and he shared it. From Mirabeau's predilection for Mendelssohn sprang his affection for the entire Jewish nation 2.

11 is all there is to it. It is probable that Mirabeau was only so sensitive to the memory of Mendelssohn, whom he had never seen, because he had previously been sensitive to the brilliance and charms of a Berlin Jewess, famous at the same time for her beauty, her wit and her salon: Henriette de Lemos, married to Dr. Herz. Mirabeau became her captive³, and it's safe to assume that it was she who best inspired his love for her.

1 "Galonné bought him, and sent him as a spy to the courts of Germany and especially Prussia, to study the future prince. Nothing is more disgusting than Mirabeau's fifty-one letters to Calonne; in addition to vanity pushed to the point of delirium, he displays a low immorality, and grossly judges people and things. He is concerned only with the ignoble appetites of the new king, and advises Galonné to send a woman as a spy, indicating the physical qualities she should possess." (Gantú, *Histoire universelle*, t. XVIII, p. 6.)

2 Graetz, *Histoire des juifs*, t. XI, p. 191.

3 "Mirabeau showed himself the assiduous host of this residence, much more for Henriette Herz than

for her husband." Graetz, *ibid.* p. 157. – In *VEntrée des Israélites, etc.*, read pages 379, 380, 381 relating to "Mirabeau and the Berlin Jewess".

the admiration of the departed philosopher, and who, lighting an oriental flame in her heart, made her promise to rehabilitate the nation to which Mendelssohn, and she herself, belonged. Chateaubriand wrote of Mirabeau:

"Nature seemed to have molded his head for empire or for the gallows, carved his arms to embrace a nation or to abduct a woman. When he shook his mane, looking at the people, he stopped them; when he raised his paw and showed his nails, the plebs ran furious. We now know that among the women abducted by this colossus, the Berlin Jewess was the most perceptive and, perhaps, the most dangerous. She guessed, she heard the volcano rumbling in that chest, and mingled the bubbles and breaths of fire that were about to come from it with those of her nation.

But the Berlin connections alone do not explain Mirabeau's devotion to the Jewish race. He still loved it because of the contempt in which it was held: this contempt was like a bond between him and it. This may seem strange, a paradox, but let's reflect on the situation of this man and this race. Mirabeau – all historians agree – had arrived at the Estates-General under the crushing weight of the fame of his vices. His first appearance in the ranks of the Third Estate had aroused murmurs. At first, this future king of the tribune had great difficulty gaining the floor; he inspired disgust in good people; they didn't want to hear him, as if they feared the stench of his debaucheries. Already, in connection with his pamphlet on agiotage,

1 Chateaubriand, *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*. directed against Necker, he had drawn this reply from the virtuous Rulhière: "You, speak of fatherland, Count de Mirabeau! If you weren't covered in triple brass, how could you not blush at uttering that name? What constitutes a citizen is a family with ties to the common family, relatives, friends, clients, property to use for themselves and the fatherland; duties as son, brother, husband, father to fulfill; an honorable career to follow. But do you, Comte de Mirabeau, have any of these characteristics? You, without asylum, without parents, have for your ordinary domicile the prisons, where, in turn, locked up or consigned by paternal prudence, guilty or foolish, you have distilled the poisons of your soul, gnawed with your teeth the bars of your dungeons, to train yourself to tear even better what is most honorable and most respected."

Crushed under this appalling reputation, Mirabeau needed all the power of his genius to free himself from the mountain of contempt weighing down on him, and barely lifted by the rarest prodigies of eloquence. When his enemies or his envious ones scorned his past life, he bowed his head, feeling that he had deserved these reproaches. This mountain of contempt stood like an impenetrable barrier between his genius and the confidence of Louis XVI. Towards the end of his life, he is said to have exclaimed: "Ah! if I had carried into the Revolution a reputation similar to that of Malesherbes, what a fate I would have assured for my homeland A".

1 Cantu, *Histoire universelle*, t. XVIII p. 27.

Such was the contempt in which Mirabeau lived. Now, isn't it natural, in the still good depths of human nature, that once you've experienced contempt and know you deserve it, you feel compassion for those who have had the misfortune to be born and birthed in the midst of it: and then you don't refuse the help they come to ask you for! This explains Mirabeau's great sympathy for the Jewish cause. In *La Réforme politique des juifs*, a work he published in their favor, he cannot, in reference to the allure of glory that exists for every man, hold back this almost poignant cry, addressed to the poor Jew: "An unfortunate being, without a homeland, who can nowhere acquire, nor freely exercise his talents; in whose virtue there is no faith, and for whom there exists no kind of glory1 !...".

This is how we explain, with sufficient proof, Mirabeau's sympathy for this unfortunate race. After that, if the gold of the Jews had not contributed to fostering and cementing this sympathy more solidly, not

only do we have no reason to revolt at this thought, but we even have no difficulty in admitting it. It is a perfect historical certainty that the great and poor Mirabeau was in need all his life, because of his pleasures; it is also a perfect certainty that, on urgent advice, Louis XVI resigned himself to buying Mirabeau, and gave him 600,000 francs, in addition to a pension of 50,000 francs a month². So there's no risk of

1 De la Ré forme politique des juifs, by Mirabeau, p. 61.

2 Cantu, t. XVIII, p. 26: "Mirabeau's relations with Monsieur make a rash judgment, in thinking that if the King of France, to win Mirabeau over, had to give gold, all the more reason why the sons of Israel should slip in some! They no doubt remembered an episode from the Bible, their ancient story: the lion who was met on the road with a honeycomb in his mouth L 11 It is probable that they imitated the bees, and that, in the mouth of the lion of the Revolution, eloquence was aided by a persuasive ingot!... In addition to these various explanations, it remains a fact, according to the Moniteur, that Mirabeau was the declared and devoted champion of the Jewish cause within the National Assembly. Others, perhaps, did more detailed work; he laid down the broad lines, defended them, and ensured their maintenance. His words were powerful. Whether the Assembly was weary or frightened, it has been said, it was enough for this hideous and sublime head to appear in the gallery, and for his powerful voice to read out a few of those words that need to be pronounced, not written, to give it a violent jolt and warm it up². And so it happened, on several occasions, with this question, which had no consequences other than the promise of an embassy and a stipend from Louis XVI's coffers, a stipend of 50,000 fr. per month for some time: this result was not the least of the wishes of an orator tormented by great debts and great needs. Married in 1772, he still hadn't paid for his wedding clothes at the end of October 1789". (Poujoulat, Histoire de la Révolution, p.163.)- "Devoured by needs" dissatisfied with the present, he moved towards an unknown future, making people assume everything about his talents, his ambition, his vices, the poor state of his fortune, and authorizing, by the cynicism of his words, all suspicions and all slanders." (Thiers, Histoire de la Révolution française, t. I, p. 135).

1 Histoire de Samson.

2 Thiers, Histoire de la Révolution française, p. 174.

Jewish emancipation, about which the Assembly seemed weary or ill-informed. Baumetz, an opposing deputy, having said that, "up until now, the Jews had been cursed by political law, just as they appeared to be cursed by religion"), Mirabeau's indignant voice cried out: "Religion, our holy religion, curses no one; on the contrary, it blesses all men without distinction *."

V

If Mirabeau was the shining standard-bearer of the Israelite cause within the Assembly, the priest Grégoire was its zealous servant, its most active agent. Our readers are already familiar with this strange pastor, his success at the Metz contest (pages 28-30), and his fervor in having the National Assembly resolve the Jewish question from its very first sessions, and before any other issues (pages 97, 102). Let's complete his physiognomy, seen only from the tents of Israel.

A superficial eulogy presents this physiognomy as follows: "He was a man in whom two very different natures were harmoniously combined. As proud of his reason as a philosopher, as simple of heart as the humblest village shepherd, he had learned from reading secular authors to despise prejudice, and from reading the Gospel to love the poor¹.

Without in any way detracting from the harmonious combination of qualities that came to him from nature, the Gospel and philosophy, we have no hesitation in saying that, beneath this happy blend, lay a deep-seated ambition, aroused by the laurels of Metz; and that his disobedience to the Church, stemming from ambition, made his undeniable talents dangerous.

The same eulogy adds: "This priest, so hard on earthly powers, who voted unhesitatingly for the death

of Louis XVI, nevertheless devoted his life to the defense of the Jews and all the damned of this world⁷⁰
71."

Would that he had rejected the death vote with horror, and not undertaken the defense of the Jews, who were by no means the damned!

It is one of the most painful aspects of history to see questions of the greatest interest to mankind spoiled by priests in revolt. Grégoire, a constitutional priest, spoiled the Jewish question by violating it, by forcing it. He is remembered for this trait that indicates a man light on procedure:

At the opening of the Estates General, movable barriers were placed at the doors of the hall, giving different entrances to the clergy, the nobility and the communes. Abbé Grégoire arrived; he recriminated; then he quickly stepped over the barrier, to testify that none should exist between the three orders.

After Grégoire, the Jews will jump into society in the same way!

Shouldn't the parish priest of Emberménil, in a cause of such exceptional gravity, imitate the prudence of the Church which, in ordaining him a priest, had entrusted him with its own interests, and then, instead of posing as the noisy liberator of the Israelites, humbly side with the bishop-members of the Assembly, who advised, along with kindness for this people, circumspection? What a painful contrast, on the rostrum of the Assembly, between the petulance of this undisciplined priest and the wise measure of Mgr de la Fare, his bishop in Nancy? The bishop said: "The Jews have grievances to redress. The legislator has forgotten that they are men and unhappy. They must be granted protection, safety and freedom; but not active citizens... My book orders me to speak out against this motion¹. Grégoire had other ideas than his bishop, and, when he once had them, "I am," he said of himself, "like granite; I can be broken, I cannot be bent^{72 73}."

A smug mind, with an inconsiderate zeal, is almost always short-sighted. The parish priest of Emberménil is proof of this. To allay fears about granting full civil and political rights to the Hebrews, did he not repeat over and over again: "We will not see Jews wearing the diadem, and by granting them a land of Gessen, we will not seek our Pharaohs from them⁷⁴". Poor Gregory! Poor short-sightedness! Yet it was easy to foresee that the emancipated of the day before would become, the very next day, the kings of the age, Pharaohs of a new kind! But wouldn't the gold dust of the Hebrews have dazzled him? We're tempted to think so. We've compared him to the coche fly (page 101); at the end of the climb, the good La Fontaine has his fly say:

Çà, Messieurs Tes chevaux, pay me for my trouble.

The curé d'Emberménil certainly didn't go through the French Revolution empty-handed. From the Republicans, he accepted a bishopric; from Emperor Napoleon, the titles of Count, Senator, Commander of the Legion of Honor, with a considerable endowment of cash. The emancipation of the poor blacks of Saint-Domingue, of which he was the ardent promoter, is said to have brought him great benefits¹. Would the emancipation of wealthy Israel alone have brought him nothing? Hardly. His biographers, moreover, do not spare him in this respect.

But, to return to his misconceptions on the Jewish question, the impatient pride that stirred him to triumph was such that he, a priest, did not shrink from slander and betrayal: to rehabilitate the people of Calvary, he did not hesitate to denigrate the people of the Church. His writings on the Jews, his motions to the Assembly in their

neration of the Jews, p. 130; he repeats it in his Motion in favor of the Jews, tabled at the National Assembly, p. 17.

¹ Bertrand de Molleville, in his *Histoire de la Révolution*, t. VIII, p. 380, speaks of an 80,000-franc gratuity presented to him by the Société des Amis des noirs.

His words, "We're the ones who forced them to become vicious. The Jew was despised, he became

despicable; in his place, perhaps we would have been worse! The crimes of the Jews, their misfortunes, bear witness to our conduct towards them. Nations, admit with a whimper that this is your doing. The Jews have produced the effects, you had set the causes: who are the most guilty?" It was as if he were taking it upon himself to transfer the thorns of Jesus' crown onto the heads of the Jews... It was this spirit of denigration that prompted him to lobby the National Assembly to have the emancipation decree adopted and promulgated on the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Day. He himself admits to his efforts. "I would have liked the matter to have been discussed and decreed on Saint Bartholomew's Day, so that an act of justice and benevolence could mark the end of a crime that will forever be execrable^{75 76}. Who can fail to see that such a project implied and concealed a gratuitous insult to the Church? For a Catholic priest, who comes to ask for the emancipation of the Jews on the anniversary of Saint Bartholomew's Day, first exposes the ignorant and simple to believe that the Church feels the need for reparation, and wants to be forgiven for the massacre of the Protestants by the emancipation of the Israelites. Eli well, the Church has nothing to apologize for; it condemns St. Bartholomew's Day as an execrable political attack. The National Assembly, many of whose members were still Christians, understood the terrible significance of such an act, and rejected Grégoire's plan.

Some have sought to excuse the boldness of the curé d'Em-berménil by saying that he wanted to Christianize the Revolution. The Revolution de-Christianized him. How many imprudent people shared his fate! The rest of his life, and his salt, were deplorable¹.

The severity of judgment, which devotion to the Church and the defense of the Christian people have commanded our pen, has not, however, banished gratitude from our hearts. Gregory loved the Israelites; supported or not by temporal rewards, his successes were often moved, convinced and sincere: May I," he said, "alleviate the sufferings of an unfortunate nation, and provide it with a more eloquent defender; it will not find a more zealous one^{77 78} " Gratefulness makes us feel a poignant tug at our heartstrings when we compare the fate of those who began our emancipation with the fate of those who completed it: Louis XVI and Malesherbes, Mirabeau and Grégoire! The first two dying as martyrs on a scaffold, the other two dying as one is not allowed to die: Mirabeau asked on his deathbed for music and flowers, and Grégoire refused to allow the Church, his mother, to recant.

Poor Mirabeau! Poor Curé d'Emberménil! May what they did for Israel have softened God's justice for them!

VI

Opposite these two zealous promoters of Israelite emancipation, two main opponents stood in the ranks of the Constituante: Abbé Maury and Rcwbell.

Abbé Maury - later Cardinal Maury - was the son of a humble shoemaker from Valréas (Vaucluse). Ardent by nature, witty, well-educated, with a strong and abundant eloquence, he entered the Estates General of 1789 as a deputy of the clergy. His crowning glory was to stand up almost alone to Mirabeau's thundering words. ¹¹ declared himself the defender of the Church and royalty. This impartial judgment has been passed on him:

- " Abbé Maury, the Mirabeau of the right side, such a powerful improviser with an ever-classical language, shows a spectacle unheard of in history: it is that of a man of the people protecting all the past that the people want to destroy, defending the privileges and titles of the nobility despite the nobility itself, asking for more guarantees for the monarchy than the king dares to ask for, surrounding with his arms and hands the king and the Church.

the king, wrapping his nervous arms around V, the work of centuries, as it fell piece by piece before him... A strange and glorious destiny that led to unworthy weaknesses. These revolutions that Abbé Maury pursues with such eloquent audacity, will seem to want to avenge themselves of his blows by stealing from his eyes the line of duty^{79!}" -

This man, who fights in the name of the past, who wraps his nervous arms around the work of the centuries as it falls piece by piece, takes the same attitude to the question of the Jews. As a priest, he wanted them to be respected; as a Frenchman, he was opposed to introducing them into the heart of France, by entrusting them with the management of public affairs.

His argument against them caused a sensation:

"I observe first of all that the word Jew is not the name of a sect, but of a nation which has laws, which has always followed them, and which still wants to follow them. To call Jews citizens would be like saying that, without letters of naturality and without ceasing to be English or Danish, Englishmen and Danes could become French citizens... The Jews have lived through seventeen centuries without mixing with other peoples.

"They must not be persecuted; they are men, they are our brothers; and anathema to anyone who speaks of intolerance! You have recognized this, and since then you have assured the Jews of the most extensive protection. Let them therefore be protected as individuals and not as Frenchmen, since they cannot be citizens⁸⁰." ■

The President of the Assembly at the time was the Count de Clermont-Tonnerre, very favorable, too favorable to the Israelites. Reasoning from the point of view of French unity, he reproached Abbé Maury for wanting, by excluding the Israelites, to constitute or preserve a separate nation within the bosom of the French nation, which had already made so many sacrifices to the need for strong unity. Il ne peut," exclaimed the Count, "y avoir une nation dans la nation!

- "It's a nation that has laws, that has always followed them and still wants to follow them," said Abbé Maury.

- Il ne peut y avoir une nation dans la nation," replied the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre;

The future lies in these words.

It's true that the new organization of nations makes it impossible to exclude Jews. Only, supposing the great storms that are brewing submerge the nations or dissolve them, the Hebrews, who still have their laws, will survive!

Vil

The most relentless fighter against Jewish emancipation was Rewbell.

11 was harsh and hurtful in the vividness and harshness of his language. "Rewbell, a mediocre lawyer from Colmar, violent, lackluster at the Constituent Assembly, instigator of the violation of the secrecy of letters, distinguished himself by his animosity against Louis XVI. In Mainz, while the prince was on trial, he wrote to urge condemnation, expressing astonishment that Louis Capot was still alive: "Let it be inferred from this whether he should have been kind to the Jews.

All the complaints of this unfortunate province, devoured by usurers, came to him as deputy for Alsace. At the session of December 24, 1789, when the Count of Clermont-Tonnerre insisted on emancipation, the fiery deputy from Alsace exclaimed: "The decree which will elevate the Jews to the rank of citizens will, have no doubt, be their death warrant in Alsace, so much do the people hate them there, and so much do I fear that their fury will be aroused upon them! 2".

It was following this session that Rewbell, attacked

1 Poujoulat, Histoire de la Révolution, p. 497 - Dézobky, Dictionnaire, at the word Rewbell.

8 Moniteur, 1789, December 2nd.

by Camille Desmoulins, concerning the opinion he had defended in concert with Abbé Maury, wrote the spiritual pamphleteer a letter in which he invited him to go and see for himself, in Alsace, the true state of affairs. Your humanity," he said, "after a few hours' stay, would surely lead you to employ all your talents in favor of the numerous, hard-working and brave class of my unfortunate compatriots, oppressed and repressed in the most atrocious manner by the cruel horde of these /I[ricans crowded into

my country i."

The death warrant prophesied by Rewbell was executed in April 1790. When news reached Alsace that the Constituent Assembly was preparing to issue a decree favorable to the Jews, a deafening rumor spread everywhere. The barbaric scenes of the previous summer were about to be repeated (see p. 105 6 above). Fortunately, the Count of Clermont-Tonnerre, Abbé Grégoire, Mirabeau and Rœderer hastened to inform the Assembly of the dangers facing their clients. For the second time, the National Assembly placed their persons and property under the protection of the law. And as Louis XVI was still king, the generous monarch was quick to grant them his protection. A proclamation from the king appeared in Alsace 81 82; and furthermore, by his order, M. de la Tour-du-Pin wrote to their families in Alsace.

Tour-du-Pin wrote in their favor to M. de Rochambeau, who was in command of the province¹. The trembling Jews were protected, and Rewbell's sad prophecy was not fulfilled.

Rewbell is one of the last figures in history to show his relentlessness against the Israelites. He who was astonished that Louis Capet was still alive could well conceive the same astonishment about the remains of this indestructible people in its duration ².

VIII

Mirabeau, Grégoire, Maury and Rewbell, the figures we have just introduced, were the focus of the Assembly's divergences for two years, as it ordered the municipalities and National Guards to use all their power to protect their persons and property.

"The King has sanctioned and sanctions the said decree, and consequently instructs and orders the municipalities and national guards to comply with it, and to enforce and observe it.

"Done in Paris, on April 18, 1790 and of our reign the sixteenth.

Signed: LOUIS.

Par le Roi :

Signed: T>e Sai.nt-Priest. ■>

1 Grégoire, Motion en faveur des juifs, notice historique, p. 10.

2 Rewbell was the constant persecutor of émigrés. His talent and obstinacy in his work earned him the presidency of the Directoire; his brutal and sharp character made him unsuitable for foreign relations, which he believed he could handle. Under Bonaparte, he joined the Conseil des Anciens, disappeared from political life after the 18 brumaire, and died in the Haut-Rhin, with a reputation for avarice. the debates on the Jews, the animosities of some, the encouragement of others.

And what was the result?

Hesitation, ever-increasing hesitation, and, as a result, indefinite postponements of the question.

Overly favorable historians agree that the Jewish affair was postponed several times, but they add that "each time it was deferred by the urgency and multiplicity of other occupations¹". This is not the truth.

You don't postpone a case like this for two years just because you have other things to do. More impartial historians frankly state why the Assembly adjourned: because it had vague apprehensions.

"Despite all urging, the question of the Jews in all its force was not put on the agenda of the National Assembly until very late, as if the Assembly had been afraid to raise the issue^{83 84}. And again: "The

Jewish question became more and more burning... But always adjournments... The Jewish representatives were losing patience ⁸⁵. Such an admission justifies what we said at the beginning of this chapter, and which it is important to repeat: this assembly, which nothing surprises, which nothing stops, enthusiastic to the point of presumption, feels ill at ease, indecisive, weak, faced with a sanction, a decree concerning the Jews. It would take her two years to draw up this decree; she would write it eleven times, granting something from time to time; it would have to be wrested from her, so to speak, piece by piece.

Here, moreover, is the picture of the Assembly's trial and error, postponements and successive partial concessions:

On December 24, 1789, the question was postponed for the first time.

On January 28, 1790, the civil rights formerly granted to the Jews of Bordeaux by Henri II and some of his successors were recognized and confirmed, but the matter was again adjourned for the Jews of Alsace.

A month later, on February 26, 1790, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt asked the Assembly to set a date for dealing with the civil status to be granted to the remaining Jews; he was told that this question was undoubtedly very important, but that there were others who were more so, and the adjournment was voted 86 87.

Eighteen days later, on April 16, 1790, the Jews of Alsace, threatened by enraged populations, were placed, by a special decree, under the protection of the law and the National Assembly; but the examination of their final fate was again postponed 88.

Fourteen days later, on April 30, 1790, their supporters in the Assembly returned to the fray with a decree granting citizenship rights to all those born outside the kingdom to foreign parents, provided they had been domiciled in France for five years. This project meets with no contradiction. But, as an amendment was requested to include Jews nominally, far from adopting this motion, the Assembly decreed that it did not intend to prejudge the question of the Jews, which had been and was being postponed^.

Three months later, on July 20, 1790, at ten o'clock in the evening, when most of the Assembly's benches were empty, all the charges and fees demanded of the Jews were repealed, but there was still silence on their definitive fate^{89 90}.

Then a great year passed, fourteen months, without the Assembly, despite a skilful and pressing siege by the Jews, agreeing to take up the issue again. Indeed, during these fourteen months, five attempts were made, accompanied several times by ruse to surprise the Assembly, and they failed; here they are:

On August 25 and September 2, 1790, with regard to the judicial organization in which Protestants were admitted, the Assembly declared that it did not yet intend to prejudge the Jews.

On January 18, 1791, Grégoire, the ardent friend of Israel, was elected President of the Assembly for two weeks; the Assembly quickly took advantage of this and the Jewish question was introduced, but immediately adjourned by a large majority.

On May 7, 1791, the Assembly heard a report by Talleyrand on religious buildings; the Jews seized on it to raise the question of their civil status: the Assembly did not respond to their request 91 92.

On May 20, 1791, the Assembly passed a law regulating the liquidation of Jewish communities, which had been suppressed like all other communities in France. As this law was of the utmost importance, and as very serious interests were at stake, it was expected that the question of civil status would also be discussed. But the Assembly did not abandon its reserve, and passed the law on the method of liquidating the debts of Jewish communities, without addressing the issue of Jewish emancipation⁹³.

Such is the picture of the Constituante's hesitations and postponements. And so, in less than two years, from December 24, 1789 to September 27, 1791, eleven official presentations of the question were made, veritable assaults, not counting individual attempts. If we add to this the three official introductory attempts made by the parish priest Grégoire, from August 3, 1789 to December 24 of the same year, we arrive at a total of 14 official representations to the Assembly, 14 categorical refusals and 14 defeats for the Jews. Doesn't it seem as if a pack of people is panting to get into the square, sniffing around, coming and going? In fact, one of the prophets likened them to this: Let it be said that the Constituante lent itself to their emancipation, and surpassed Louis XVI in kindness!

It's time to ask ourselves: Where did the Assembly's hesitations come from? And were they, in part, inspired by a religious motive?

All the research we have carried out, and our in-depth study of the Constituante, allow us to answer: these hesitations arose from two motives: one provided by the Jews in their request, the other by the people of Alsace; but in no way from a religious motive.

For the Jews, the question, when they put it to the Assembly, was badly presented, or at least very incomplete. The object of their request was ill-defined; there had been no prior agreement between them. Undoubtedly, they were asking for civil rights;

"Psimmes, Lvin. but many aspired to keep their privileges, their old customs: which was equivalent to transporting or keeping Judea in France, while enjoying France. This was the reproach levelled at the Jews of Alsace by the Jews of Bordeaux. "We don't yet know exactly what the demands of the Jews of Alsace are. But, judging by the public papers, they should seem quite extraordinary, since these Jews aspire to live in France under a special regime L "In addition, some (the Jews of Alsace, Metz, Lorraine) requested, in their petitions to the Assembly, that the rabbis continue to fulfill the functions of judges within the Jewish communities 94 95. The others (the Jews of Paris) gladly gave them leave⁹⁶. It was only very late, under the impact of repeated adjournments, that the Jews felt the need to unify their demands ⁹⁷. But given the obscurity of the question and the divergence of demands, it is not surprising that the Assembly hesitated at first, was then very happy to find a pretext for its hesitations, and eagerly agreed, from the very first session, to the remark by deputy Baumetz: "that the question concerning the Jews was barely known, that it nevertheless deserved the strictest and most scrupulous examination. ... that it was necessary to give these people time to examine their interests... that it was finally necessary to know precisely under what conditions they intended to submit themselves in order to attain the rank of French citizens h".

The other reason for the Assembly's hesitations and postponements was the growing irritation of the people of Alsace. The National Assembly had already been painfully impressed by the account given in the gallery of the enormous usury of the Jews in this unfortunate country, the legal figure of their mortgages on the land, which amounted to 12 million, and the hatred harbored against them by the population. But when reliable and cautious information informed it that the population was trembling with rage at the thought of these usurers becoming their fellow citizens, the Assembly became concerned. Faced with a state of affairs that threatened to provoke an insurrection against the government in Alsace, as well as persecution of the Jews, it hesitated, and despite the pressing and powerful representations of those concerned, it temporized, finding ways to delay until the end.

1 Moniteur du 24 et 25 décembre 1789, last hour, inflexible logic, as we shall soon say, imposed emancipation.

These are the causes of the Assembly's hesitations and slowness. But is it really true that religion played no part in these delays? And didn't the memory of Jesus Christ have any influence on the hesitations? Alas, no.

In particular, in individual consciences, we must have thought of him, and even wished that those who were heirs to the crime of Calvary would not become citizens in a Christian nation: we believe this, we are convinced of it. But these thoughts were not, and could not, be expressed in official decisions. Just think of the Constituent Assembly:

It comprised twelve hundred deputies drawn from the three orders of the nation: the clergy, the nobility and the Third Estate. Consequently, among the members of the Assembly, a certain number represented the Catholic religion; a large number, equally, in the ranks of the nobility and the Third Estate, were upright, honest, devoted to order; many, in fact, died on the scaffold. So there can be no doubt that, in their innermost being, all these deputies must have been thinking of Jesus Christ, experiencing sadness

and perplexity, and hesitating for a long time before pronouncing the social rehabilitation of the sons of Calvary's deicides;

So much for the inner voice.

But no one, not even the priests, not even the bishops, dared to make an official statement of these feelings, i.e. to consider Jesus Christ from the rostrum – and we mustn't reproach them for it, for it was no longer in anyone's power to attempt it¹. Why? Because the essence of the Constituent Assembly, its program, its goal, was human rights. A formidable original sin that was to paralyze everything, en-

1 One priest, however, tried it. Here is the official record of that session, where Talleyrand, in his report on the organization of worship, betrayed the Church:

ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

Session of May 7, 1791

M. Couturier, former priest of Salives. – I would first like to make an observation on the inconsistency of the rapporteur, who, attached by his state to the sanctuary, made a report contrary to the duties of his state. (Murmurs arose; it was requested that the discussion be closed).

M. Talleyrand, former bishop of Autun. – On behalf of the Constitution Committee, I ask that the witness be heard.

M. Couturier. – The moment has arrived! In the end, we boldly lift the mask. It is now, in formal terms, that we propose to establish Yaboniination of Desolation in the Holy Place... (On rjt.) A soldier speaks of the military ordinance, a jurisconsult quotes the code and digest, Barthole and Cujas; I quote my Law, which is also yours. It is therefore proposed, to use the language of Scripture, that you establish Yabomination of Desolation in the Holy Place. (There is laughter and murmuring.) It is proposed by a formal decree to establish any kind of worship in our churches, to convert them into mosques, synagogues, Lutheran temples, Anabaptist temples, pagodas; to order that the temple of the true God be converted into a temple of Baal. (Some murmur.) If, two years ago, someone had dared to propose converting churches into mosques, into pagodas, you would have rejected him with in lignation. (Several voices: No, no.) The rapporteur asked that the decree of the Directoire be declared worthy of praise, and that it be sent to the eighty-two départements to serve as a model. Is this the way to respect our holy religion? Is this how you keep your hands off our religion? Is this how our religion is raised so high? It was elevated when the Pantheon was consecrated to the true God, the God of our fathers. Today, we propose to consecrate the temple of the true God to error, to idolatry; if I were the enemy of the Constitution, if I wanted to behave in a Machiavellian way, I would say to you: Impiété mensuram. Don't you fear that the people, not finding the temple

tacher, and consequently paralyzed any Christian argument in the gallery! The rights of Christ were no longer in question, since the Declaration of the Rights of Man voted and adopted at the end of August 1789. The Social Contract had replaced the Gospel as the basis of society. If any deputy had attempted to fight Jewish emancipation in the name of Christ's rights, he would have been stopped in his tracks. A strange and painful sight, however! While, by virtue of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Jesus Christ had been effectively expelled from French legislation, exposed, as in the past, to not knowing where to lay his head, we were preparing, on the other hand, to welcome the Jews, and give them the right of citizenship that had been taken away from the God-Man. The Jews, as men, were taking precedence over the God-Man. But there was hesitation. We sensed that there was a terrible contrast here that we didn't quite realize. Right up to the last evening of its existence, the Constituent Assembly, neither tranquil nor recollected, seeing the churches where it went to fulfill its religious duties become the temple of idols, seeing these pulpits of truth turned into pulpits of pestilence... (Laughter.)

I'm quite surprised that, in an assembly where there is so much light, I'm troubled when I use Scripture's own words. I quote what Our Lord says, following the expressions I have just recalled: When you

drink: Vabomination of desolation (They laugh: there is a murmur; there is a murmur).
laughter), flee, flee but. Gentlemen, the decree
is not yet carried, I can say: Flee: flee these lands once so Christian, where the true God was worshipped,
where the god of Baal is now worshipped: flee, flee: cross the mountains so as not to witness the
desecration of temples and the overthrow of altars!... I conclude: 1° that the Assembly reject the
proposed articles; 2° that Messrs. of the Paris Departmental Directory be summoned to the bar; 3° that
the Constitution Committee be called to order and censured; it is to the Assembly's honor to grant my
request.

would have preferred not to decide the question. It adjourned three times, six times, eleven times, and
the last time indefinitely; the discontents and rumors of Alsace were a relief, a happy pretext. But in the
end, postponements, slowness and hesitation had to give way to the inflexible logic of one principle: O
Jesus Christ (forgive the reflection), by virtue of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, you must leave,
and the Jews must enter!...

CHAPTER VI

MEANS EMPLOYED BY ISRAELITES

TO OVERCOME THE ASSEMBLY'S HESITATIONS

1789-1790

I. The Jews of Paris set out to make the National Assembly capitulate. Their neighborhood in 1789;
their numbers; their leaders: Cerfberr and Berr-Isaac-Berr. – II. Means they use to compel the Assembly
to favor them. First means: supplication. A spell on several presidents of the Assembly. – III. Second
means: the influence of gold. – IV. Third means: logic; the Jews appeal to human rights. Implacable
arrogance of their petitions. Embarrassment of the 89 legislators. – V. Fourth means: recourse to the
faubourgs and the Commune. The young lawyer Godard (1791): nicknamed the lawyer of the Jews. His
portfolio in our hands.

I

To those who know the restless and inventive character of the Israelite race, we will certainly cause no
surprise if we say that, faced with the hesitations and slowness of the Constituent Assembly, the sons of
Israel did not stand idly by. They reminded us of what natural history tells of the beavers who, gathered
in troops along the waters, make dams and build dwellings for themselves: They, too, have dreamed of a
dam that would enable them to move from the back alleys of the Middle Ages into the interior of
modern society, and build new, more spacious dwellings; but the National Assembly seems in no way
inclined to encourage and welcome them; industrious rodents, how will they go about achieving their
ends, and one day possessing sumptuous dwellings?

At the time these things were being planned, towards the end of the last century, there were scarcely
more than 500 Jews in Paris. Today, the capital is teeming with them.

These 500 Jews preferred to live in the Carmelite district. They had a small synagogue in the narrow
Rue Brisemiche. In immediate and daily contact with the proponents of modern ideas, this Parisian
Jewish colony was more advanced and decisive than the rest of France's Israelites. Proof of this is the fact
that, in order to acquire civil rights, it did not hesitate to throw into the sea – it would be more accurate
to say into the Seine – its particular syndics, its rabbis 98 99.

Like the beavers with their saw-toothed teeth, flattened tail and nimble fingers, this small, interesting
and fertile troop was responsible for gnawing away obstacles and building the dike over which all the
tribes of Israel would one day pass.

His leaders, however, were not from Paris. They came from Alsace and Lorraine. The two principal ones
were Cerf-Berr and Berr-Isaac-Berr.

The name Ber (which, in German, means bear) is as famous in the chronicles of the Israelites of France

as that of O'Connell in the mountains of Ireland. Gerf-Berr helped emancipate his co-religionists, particularly through his wealth; Berr-Isaac-Berr, particularly through his speeches: both, through their tireless efforts.

Gerfberr is the wealthy Israelite from Alsace whose name we have mentioned many times. A former general manager of fodder in northern France, he had rendered signal services to Louis XVI, who in return had granted him the rights of a royal subject, and permission to own land and houses throughout the kingdom. Strasbourg, as we have seen, protested against this munificence, and bravely threw out the Jew, the king's protégé. At this point in our story, Gerfberr, who had moved to Paris, became the driving force behind an agreement between the Société des Amis de la Constitution in Strasbourg and the Société des Amis de la Constitution in Paris. A report or memorandum from the Alsatian Friends in favor of the Jews reached the Friends in the capital; among other arguments, it stated: "I buy grain at the market; I don't care whether the field that produced it was plowed by an Anabaptist, a Catholic or a Lutheran: I wouldn't care if it had been plowed by a Jew; but what I don't care about is that there is a lot of grain at the market, and that it is sold at a moderate price.

at a moderate price. I don't care whether the field that produces my food belongs to St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Bruno, or some descendant of the patriarch Jacob; what no one should care about is that all fields are cultivated and well-tended *. It's easy to recognize in this language the inspiration of the Director General of Forages. But he was mistaken, the memoir was mistaken, as were all the liberals of the Constituante, when they persuaded themselves that it was absolutely indifferent whether a sheaf of wheat was cultivated and harvested by a Catholic, a Lutheran or a Jew, as long as it was full and well pressed. Matter depends on spirit. Every creature is, of itself, indifferent; but the idea infused into it makes it a source of life or a volcano of death. A sheaf of wheat presented as a gift to a beggar by the prior of a monastery or by the venerable of a Masonic lodge indicates two opposite goals. In the same way, whether collected from a Jewish or Lutheran field, over which no blessing has passed, or from a Christian field which has been blessed, it will not be indifferent-

1 Rapport lu à l'Assemblée de la Société des Amis de la Constitution, le 27 février 1790, sur la question de l'état civil des juifs d'Alsace, p. 20 - Extrait du procès-verbal de cette séance:

"The society, having heard the reading of the report, decided to adopt it in its entirety, and to send it in its name to the Société des Amis de la Constitution in Paris, as the expression of its feelings and opinion on this matter, by requesting it to put it under the eyes of the National Assembly."

. Signed: Barbier de Tinan, President.

La l'i'i pondérance juive.

income. Liberals, alas! did not enter into these mystical distinctions. Cerfberr, a stranger to Christian doctrine, didn't even suspect them. He was preoccupied with just one thing: sharing with his co-religionists the freedom to acquire the fields and houses he himself owned, by virtue of Louis XVI's letters patent. Freedom was, in his eyes, the beautiful and gentle Queen Esther; new Mordecai, he said to his rays: Not for me alone, but for all our brothers!

Berr-Isaac-Berr, the other leader, was a native of Nancy. He made his name by translating from Hebrew into French the funeral prayers composed by his teacher, the Rabbi of Lorraine, on the death of Louis XV. He always maintained good relations with the monarchy; under the Restoration, he received a pension from Louis XVIII and Charles X. Berr-Isaac-Berr "was an eminent, enlightened and religious mind. Combining austerity of morals, severity of principles, firmness of convictions, with kindness of heart and gentle religion, he lived at the head of his numerous family like a rabbi, like a patriarch¹⁰⁰ 101." Chosen by his co-religionists in Lorraine to plead their cause before the National Assembly, he was truly, along with Cerfberr, the pioneer of emancipation. Mgr de la Fare, bishop of Nancy and

deputy of Lorraine, having reported to the tribune the frightened words of one of his diocesans: "Yes, Monseigneur, if we were to lose you, we would see a Jew become our bishop, such is their ability to seize everything¹⁰²"; "Yes, Monseigneur, if we were to lose you, we would see a Jew become our bishop, such is their ability to seize everything¹⁰³". Berr-Isaac-Berr wrote to the noble prelate "that Jacob's children, long unhappy, were not aiming at his crook, but only at a free, peaceful and respected roof, on the soil of France!"

Berr-Isaac-Berr was 46 when he stood up for his brothers' cause before the National Assembly; Cerfberr was 63 ².

Under the leadership of these two leaders, the Jews of Paris laid siege to the Assembly, forcing it to capitulate.

II

They used every means that such an undertaking and the genius of the Israelite race could suggest. The word "means", which means: that which is used to achieve an end, too easily loses this meaning with the dear Hebrews in another meaning, which also belongs to them and which means: wealth, pecuniary faculties. Israel's means, as pecuniary faculties, are considerable, who doesn't know? And because 180 MEANS EMPLOYED TO VAIN gold is perverted, the other means employed to bend the Constituent have lost their fairness in their alliance with this metal.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

The first means was supplication. They begged, even in that obsequious, fearful tone befitting long-suffering and despised beings. In most of their petitions to the deputies of the National Assembly, these poor people eagerly used the language of the time, calling out to the deputies: Nosseigneurs, "Nosseigneurs, could the hopes we had been led to conceive, and which your decrees themselves had given us, now fade away?... Our Lords, we entrust ourselves to all of you L".

We have not come across any documents establishing that these supplications were very persuasive.

With the exception of the session of October 14, 1789, when the representatives of the Jewish communities of Alsace and Lorraine were introduced for the first time at the bar of the Assembly, and Berr-Isaac-Berr pronounced, with tears in his eyes, some truly touching words (see above, pages 118-19), the pleas of the Jews found the Assembly stiff and on guard! Their bent backs, pale faces and moaning voices did little to arouse their compassion. And yet we had entered the era of romance, of tender, generous feelings! The Jews said: "He

1 Nouvelle Adresse des Juifs à l'Assemblée nationale, December 24, 1789 (from Frault's printing house, Quai des Augustins). the hardest oak, a triple brass must surround the heart*" of this Assembly!

And the members of the Assembly thought among themselves: "This floured block tells us nothing worth ¹⁰³ ¹⁰⁴!

There was one exception, however. Some of the presidents were extremely tender-hearted, perhaps too much so! At the time of the Constituante, the chair of the presidency was renewed every month. Now, when the chair is occupied by a friend of Israel, the pleas become more urgent, and an attempt is made. We'll refrain from naming names, but there's no harm in naming Abbé Grégoire. ¹¹ happened to be in the chair in January 1791, and immediately the Jewish question erupted; but he drew this green lesson from the Duc de Broglie: "It is with surprise that I hear renewed in this tribune a proposal relating to an object which you, Gentlemen, have so wisely postponed for several months. I am no less astonished that a member of the ecclesiastical committee has taken the liberty of interfering with the stated agenda, in order to make a proposal that is as dangerous in itself as it is inappropriate in the circumstances¹⁰⁵...". In short, a real charm from Israel sometimes hovered over the presidency. What was this charm made of? A clever chemist would be the one to tell us! Every literate person had read Rousseau, and, in all likelihood, at the presidency of the Assembly, this reflection of the philosopher from Geneva must not

have been unknown: "I was making a golden century to nia fancy, and, filling these beautiful days with all the scenes of my life that had left me with sweet memories, and with all those that my heart still desired, I tenderized myself to tears over the true pleasures of humanity." Hypocritical Rousseau! Naive presidents! The golden age you dream of with such sentimental philosophy for yourselves and for mankind is not far off: the Jewish people, emancipated by you, will bring it about, but in their own way, and to their own profit.

III

So, with supplication on their lips, the second means the Jews used to interest others in their cause was gold in their hands.

No one will ever believe that gold, which has always been the great power of this people since its dispersion, did not serve them in this instance, and that the purse, which had so often provided them with the means to resolve the most delicate difficulties, was, this time, disdained by them, so ideal would their cause have seemed, and so disinterested would their views have been! This, however, is the strange assertion made by the historian Graetz. Enemies of the Jews," he says, "had spread the rumor that a very wealthy Jew (Cerfberr) had distributed very considerable sums of money to win lawyers. This was a terrible slander. Is it possible to suborn a city of seven hundred thousand inhabitants in this way?" Too innocent an assertion, and too biased a justification! No, no doubt, you can't suborn a town of seven hundred thousand inhabitants; but in a town of seven hundred thousand inhabitants, you can suborn this or that inhabitant, this or that lawyer, this or that deputy. This is what our good Hebrews did not disdain. We firmly believe this, without in the least detracting from their qualities. Yes, it's our feeling, they had to spend and distribute a lot of gold. The Duc de Broglie, moreover, declared as much in the middle of Parliament. Among them," he said in the session of January 18, 1791, "there is one in particular who has acquired an immense fortune at the expense of the State, and who is spreading considerable sums of money around the city of Paris to win defenders for his cause^{106 107}." ¹¹ meant Cerfberr. To accuse Cerfberr of having made his fortune at the expense of the State, when Louis XVI himself had acknowledged, in magnificent letters patent, the great services Cerfberr had rendered to the State, was an unfair accusation, unworthy of the noble duke. But whether the Duc de Broglie was mistaken in asserting "that Cerfberr was spreading sums of money all over Paris to win supporters for his cause", no, surely not!

The hands that held out the gold are not worthy of praise; those that accepted it even less so.

That the Jews resorted to such a means of persuasion was to be expected. But that, on the other hand, their emancipation was encouraged by being won over to their cause with money, was a characteristic sign of the proud and, at the same time, unproud era ushered in by the Revolution. The grave Ma-Lesherbes, presiding over the section of the Council of State charged by Louis XVI with examining the cause of the Jews, never allowed the golden calf to cast its shadow in the Council chamber. The same cannot be said of certain members, even certain presidents, of the Constituent Assembly. Society, alas! was beginning to take on that venal aspect that inevitably comes from materialistic doctrines and Voltairian mores, and which will later completely assimilate it to the Jews. Like attracts like! That's why the doors of society were no longer solidly closed to the Jews. They were no longer the heavy doors of the Middle Ages, locked with honor. The golden key already played with ease. "O venal city!" cried a foreigner at the sight of degenerate Rome, "all you need is a buyer! With their finesse of penetration, the Jews had sensed that society had become venal, and they themselves were presenting themselves as buyers!

IV

By using supplications and gold, the Jews laid siege to society by means that were familiar to them and that belonged to them. Now, however, society has unwisely offered them a means of entering its midst

without a blow: the Declaration of the Rights of Man!

Many light-hearted and irreligious Frenchmen – all the more light-hearted for having become irreligious – never realized the tremendous breach that the Declaration of the Rights of Man had made in Christian society. Let them realize this once and for all, by reading the following:

From the moment that the legislators of '89 removed the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the foundation of society, and replaced it with Rousseau's Social Contract, and from the moment that, to be a citizen of a nation such as France, all that was required in future was to be a man, without any further concern for the title of Christian, it followed that Jews had the right to apply to become citizens; for they too were men! They soon understood this, and soon presented themselves. The reader will certainly be grateful to us for placing before his eyes two striking pictures, borrowed from the historian who has rediscovered the local color of the Revolution; we will add a Jewish color to them:

"A new ferment has entered the ignorant and coarse mass, and the new ideas are having their effect. They have long since filtered insensitively from layer to layer, and after having won over the aristocracy, the entire literate part of the Third Estate, the lawyers, the schools, the entire youth, they have insinuated themselves, drop by drop and through a thousand cracks, into the class that lives by the work of its arms. The great lords, in their toilette, mocked Christianity and asserted the rights of man in front of their valets, their wigmakers, their suppliers and their entire antechamber. People of letters, lawyers and prosecutors repeated the same diatribes and theories in a more bitter tone, in cafés, restaurants, promenades and all public places. They spoke in front of the common people as if they weren't there, and all this eloquence poured out without care, splashed into the brains of the craftsman, the cabaret owner, the commissionaire, the reseller¹⁰⁸...". We add: and the Jew. Indeed, the Jews, too, in selling their rags and making their trades, have retained and brought back to the back alleys of their separate quarters what they've heard about human rights. Is it any wonder, then, that they straightened their humiliated brows, since in the eyes of the new legislation, the stain of deicide no longer counts, and said: We too are men, and as men, we demand to share in the rights of all! Were they wrong? Let us reply. From the moment that the ■ representatives of a Christian nation abandoned the heights created by Christianity to descend and place themselves on the ground of pure humanity, why, on that ground, would not the Jews have hastened to accede, raising]their heads? They did. In this danger of their appearance, who are the culprits?

Another picture of the time:

We're all familiar with the famous Fête de la Fédération, celebrated on July 14, 1790, and which was, in a way, the idyll of the Social Contract. At the Champ de Mars, the scene of the festivities, where more than three hundred thousand patriots gathered, the moment the cannon announced the oath of loyalty, every arm was raised, every voice shouted: I swear it. Before and after the oath, it was like a delirium, the details of which can be seen below. In Paris," writes an eyewitness, "I saw knights of St. Louis and chaplains dancing in the street with individuals from their department. At the Champ de Mars, on federation day, despite the pouring rain, the first to arrive began to dance; those who followed joined them and formed a round which soon embraced part of the Champ de Mars... Three hundred thousand spectators beat time with their hands. – The following days, on the Champ de Mars and in the streets, people danced, drank and sang; there was a ball and refreshments at the wheat market, and a ball on the site of the Bastille. – In Tours, where fifty-two detachments from neighboring provinces had gathered, at around four o'clock in the evening, in an irresistible burst of wild gaiety, officers, low-ranking officers and soldiers began to run through the streets, dancing and shouting: Long live the king! Long live the nation! throwing their hats in the air, and forcing everyone they met to dance. A canon of the cathedral, who was passing by quietly, is dressed in a grenadier's cap, and dragged along in the round: after him, two clerics; they are hugged a lot, then let go... Every scene ends with a ball. It's the universal finale

109 ...".

Well, now, let the reader imagine Jews appearing in the shadows, around these dances. Though still shy and grimy, they are tempted to join in. How could they not? Dances, rounds in honor of human rights and universal brotherhood, but it's the dance of the resurrected! The Middle Ages had their dance of the dead; here, it's the dance of the living and the resurrected. So they could boldly introduce themselves and say: "We're men too, let's expand the circle!"

Philosophers of the Social Contract, deputies of the Constituent Assembly of 1789, it was you who, with your Declaration of the Rights of Man, created the breach that will give way to the Jews. And you're surprised that Jews flock to your sessions to be recognized as men and accepted as citizens! It would have been simpler for them to abstain and not insist. You've opened the door, knocked it down, and they want to come in! You've knocked down the walls of Christian society, and they, with their alert feet, are already in your ranks!

It's also curious to note how, in the petitions they address to the National Assembly, alongside the pleas, there are also the boldnesses suggested by the new law. "Our lords, we trust your known respect for human rights, the impossibility you find it today to contradict all these acts of wisdom and justice which have emanated from you, the pain you would feel if you were to dishonor, by a striking injustice, a constitution which should make France happy and the object of foreign admiration : everything guarantees that our cause, which yesterday found so many adversaries among you, will find in all of you, today, as many supporters and defenders i. " What could we say to the logic of these observations? Nothing. -

The interested parties still say to the legislators: "If you refuse us, your refusal will seem like a solemn approval of popular hatred against the Jews. People will compare the Declaration of the Rights of Man, so often read and reread by them, with the unfortunate destiny of the Jews, and conclude that they are not men... You would push back into the depths of hearts the prejudice that is ready to escape... And the fury of the people, which has so often broken out against the Jews, would be even easier to ignite 110 111."

History has recorded no response to these arguments. The Assembly's embarrassment was obvious. The legislators of '89 had thoughtlessly overturned the old order of things in the name of human rights, and now an unexpected invasion - not of barbarians, as in the fourth century, but of the accursed, a race despised by all - had unexpectedly appeared to benefit immediately from the new legislation. This unexpected appearance was bound to stun the Assembly. It would have liked not to extend the recognition of man and his rights to these foreigners, but the Jews shouted at it: "It would be to put you in contradiction with the Constitution... it would be to dishonor yourselves!... It would expose us to a persecution more appalling than all the previous ones... We are men!..." And the legislators were mute with embarrassment and fear.

For a long time, society had pushed the Wandering Jew from its bosom, saying to him: Walk, walk! But now that society had ceased to be Christian, and the new legislators were reluctant to recognize the consequences of human rights for Jews, the latter turned the famous and fatal word against the Assembly and, in turn, shouted at it: March, march!

V

Finally, they employed a final means, this one occult and roundabout, reprehensible in every way: recourse to the suburbs and to the Commune. "The representatives of the Jews were losing patience", says one of their historians¹. The pain of waiting did not excuse the use of oblique channels. Their petition (January 28, 1790) to the National Assembly contained this audacious program: "Everything we would not have dared, or would have dared only with infinite precautions, in a more remote era, we can and must dare in this moment of universal regeneration, when all ideas and sentiments are taking a new

direction; and we must hasten to dare^{112 113}." They themselves put this leadership advice into practice only too well.

Here we are in possession of the last secret of how Jewish emancipation came about. Malesherbes and Louis XVI were the beginnings; the faubourgs and the Commune were the end. So, given this historical truth: that it was indeed the Commune that the Jews turned to for the supreme impetus, the categorical help that brought their emancipation to fruition, it is important, before recounting the events, to add a line to the picture we drew of the Constituent Assembly, when we described its local coloring at the beginning of chapter IV.

We described it as follows: An enthusiastic and generous assembly, but ideological, theatrical, full of presumption and self-importance. We kept in reserve, to bring it back to this place, this last trait: Assembly entirely subjected to the action of the suburbs and the Paris Commune.

This historical fact is too well known today to require many quotations. Just one will suffice: "Outside the National Assembly, there are real powers: the Hôtel de Ville, the districts and the clubs. It was there that street agitation, threats and plots were prepared... The clubs had a means of action called the Sabbath; it was an association of ten devoted men, taking the order of the day, which each of them then gave to ten men belonging to the various battalions of the Paris National Guard; all the battalions and all the sections received at once the same riot proposal, the same demonstration against the constituted authorities L"

The oppression of the National Assembly by the Commune and the districts was the hallmark of the Revolution. At odds with its sovereign, this presumptuous Assembly was obliged to grant below what it refused above: obedience. Laws were decreed in the Assembly, but received, pre - adorned, from the Hôtel de Ville and the clubs.

Well, the Israelites were obviously too perceptive and devious not to take advantage of this confusion of powers. Always adjourned and dismissed by the Assembly, they turned to the Hôtel de Ville, to the Commune, and concerted with the occult force to force the legal and legislative force to take care of them and be favorable to them.

1 Mémoires de la Fayette, t. II. - Histoire de la Révolution. by Poujoulat, p. 157-9. ■

One of their most thorough historians did not think it necessary to conceal this maneuver. "Tired," he says, "by the thousand useless efforts they had tried to obtain civil rights, they devised a last means. Seeing that it was impossible to obtain, by reason and common sense, what they called their rights, they resolved to force the VAssemblée nationale to ap ■ prove their emancipation... They knew only too well that power was no longer in the hands of the Asscm- blée, but in those of the various parties of the capital \ who, in their revolutionary zeal, dominated everything, the king, the Assembly, the whole country! The Jews of Paris, Alsace and Lorraine turned to them¹¹⁴.

Could the admission be more formal?

But for a page as serious as the one we are writing, Providence has been careful to provide us with irrefutable information and testimony.

There is one man who has remained virtually unknown to history, and who, however, just when the cause of emancipation seemed to be at a standstill for an indefinite time, rushed in, decided everything and took everything away: the lawyer Godard. In Paris in 1791, he was known as "the young lawyer of the Jews".

Now, Providence has allowed his portfolio concerning the Jews, his papers as a lawyer devoted to their cause, to fall into our hands. It was in Marseille twenty-five years ago that we made this discovery, which is truly precious, as it enables us to reveal, with the help of authentic and indisputable documents, the last phase of Jewish emancipation: its Jacobin phase.

1 Many of these documents bear the seal of the Hôtel de Ville or the Municipality of Paris, with the

autograph signatures of well-known figures. The portfolio also contains the minutes or drafts of all Godard's speeches in favor of the Jews, along with a good number of letters addressed to him, unpublished and not found elsewhere.

CHAPTER VII

THE JACOBAN PHASE OF THE JEWISH QUESTION

THE JEWS OF PARIS

TURN TO THE COMMUNE AND OVERCOME RESISTANCE FROM THE ASSEMBLY 1790-1791

1. Cerfberr and the lawyer Godard. Jacobin phase of the Jewish question. -II. Godard appears before the Paris Commune with 50 Jews enrolled in the national guide. - 111. Two abbés, one of whom, Abbé Mulot, was president of the Commune, the other, Abbé Bertolio, strongly supported the Jewish cause - IV. Bold undertaking by the Jews: they tour the 60 districts or sections of Paris, seeking their support; 59 districts out of 60 are in favor of the emancipation request; only one refuses its vote: the district of fripiers. - V. Armed with all these approvals, the Commune sends a deputation to the National Assembly to obtain, or rather to impose, the decree of emancipation of the Jews. Godard submitted a petition to the Assembly, containing some extremely serious confessions. The delegates are greeted courteously by Talleyrand, but the matter is adjourned. - VI. The Jews prove more astute than Talleyrand. Second intervention by the Commune on their behalf at the National Assembly; further adjournment. - VII. Untiring Jewish tenacity. The question, adjourned 14 times, comes up one last time, on the very eve of the closing of the Assembly. Duport, a member of the Jacobin Club, settled the issue with a solemn appeal to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. The National Assembly, cornered, capitulates.

I

Here's the chapter against the Jews! We would have liked, by framing it in black, to express the pain we felt in writing it.

Without being all honorable, the means to which we saw them resort, the supplication of their petitions, the insinuation with the presidents, the conclusion, sometimes arrogant, that they drew from the Declaration of Rights, even, to a certain extent, the use of gold, were justifiable means; but recourse to the Commune and the faubourgs comes to constitute an illicit detour and a phase of Jacobinism. Pure in Louis XVI's cabinet, troubled before the Constituante, the Jewish question was to become festering with the Commune. The hidden habits of an ill-treated and degraded race, the slowness of the National Assembly, the confusion and disarray that began to reign everywhere, and finally the fear of the plaintiffs of seeing their request definitively rejected after two years of proceedings and adjournments, explain this roundabout recourse, without excusing it.

Our greatest sadness was to meet Cerfberr there.

An Israelite of patriarchal morals and devoted to the emancipation of his brothers, burning with the desire to share with them the free and happy destiny he owes to the munificence of Louis XVI, he had successively interested in their cause, in tireless representations, Malesherbes and the King's ministers, Mirabeau and the presidents of the Constituante, Grégoire and certain hesitant consciences: that was enough!

He had to stop there.

Why did we have to meet him at number 56 rue des Blancs-Manteaux, in conciliation with the lawyer Godard 115?

These meetings are undeniable. We found the following three letters in Godard's wallet; we give them with the spelling mistakes and awkward locutions that betray a stay in the Ghetto and the use of Judeo-Alsatian jargon.

First letter: -

Mr. Theodore Cerfberr has the honor of wishing Mr. Godard good morning. As he agreed with you last Vundy that you would take the trouble to come to his house on Saturday evening with his memoir to confer together, he asks you to let him know if you would like to come tomorrow evening at 6 o'clock; he will consequently notify Messieurs les juifs de Paris.

This 14th day of January 90.

Please let me know your answer.

Second letter:

JVI. Théodore Cerfberr has the honor of wishing Mr. Godard good morning; he has the honor of sending him the enclosed documents he requests.

January 12, 90.

Third letter :

Théodore Cerfberr has the honor of wishing Mr. Godard good evening and asks him to kindly let him know if he can find him at his home tomorrow between midday and two o'clock accompanied by his colleagues.

This Saturday.

Although these letters contain nothing explicit or revealing, they are very serious. They show Cerfberr in community of action with Godard, to help and direct him in the supreme assault on the Jews L The Commune, to which they were going to have recourse, had not yet, no doubt, the dark colors it has since acquired. But the very fact that the

1 It goes without saying that Berr-Isaac-Berr, the other Jewish leader (see above, pages 178-79), was also in secret contact with Godard. We found these two letters from him, alongside those from Cerfberr, in the Jacobin lawyer's portfolio:

First letter (with style and errors).

M. Berr-Isaac-Berr has the honor of wishing Monsieur Godard all the best and sending him two passages from the Talmud translated into French. Who will still dare to maintain that the Bible or the Talmud authorizes Jews to practice usury? Or who will still dare to doubt that those who forced the Jews to live by usury alone, forced them to violate both their own law and the law of the prince?

This Monday, January 18.

Second letter.

M Berr-Isaac-Berr wishes Monsieur Godard good evening for a second time and has the honor of sending him a passage from the Talmud translated into French, by which he will easily judge whether the Jews are intolerant of foreigners, or whether with such precepts one must be accused of hatred against all those who are not Israelites. This lundy soire.

to his protection constituted, on the Israelite's part, an oblique and murky approach. The only mitigating circumstance is that the thought of rehabilitating his brothers preoccupied him; he went, asking for this rehabilitation from all the powerful of the century, like the beggar who seeks to divine the rich in those he implores, like the bird that passes from one climate to another to find warmth! His stops were the antechambers of Versailles, the allées de Malesherbes, the presbytery of Em- berménil, Mirabeau's cabinet, the Hôtel de Clermont-Tonnerre. Here he is, according to the testimony of his own letters, climbing the staircase of the Jacobin Godard; we would have preferred to meet him under the windows of the Temple prison, where our benefactor will soon be locked up I

II

How did the young lawyer Godard go about hastening the emancipation of his clients?

The Jews had been criticized for having no love of homeland outside Palestine, for being unpatriotic where they lived, and consequently for abhorring military service, since it would have meant serving a

country that was not their own. Abbé Maury even exclaimed in the National Assembly, in his first speech against them: "Will you make soldiers of them?"

- Nothing in the world will persuade them to fight on Saturdays. This belief had thus become established among the people that Jews didn't want to be soldiers, or could only be bad soldiers.

Then, one day, during a general meeting of the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville¹, the doors suddenly opened, and fifty National Guardsmen appeared, all Jews, decorated with the cockade 116 117. At their head was the young and enthusiastic lawyer Godard.

Gentlemen," he said, addressing the members of the Commune, "the Jews I present to you dare to say that they are worthy of your suffrages by the patriotic zeal which, from the moment of the Revolution, has transported their souls, covered them in civic armor, and made of them brave and tireless soldiers, entirely devoted to the salvation and prosperity of the nation."

He adds and points out that, out of five hundred Jews in Paris, more than a hundred have enlisted in the National Guard, and are sacrificing their time, their zeal and their strength to the defense of the Constitution.

Godard then asked the representatives of the Commune for a moral certificate on behalf of his clients, enabling him to appear, in the name of the city of Paris, before the deputies of the National Assembly, and thus induce them to pass a law favorable to the Jews. He uttered these words, in which Jacobin action was certainly never more visible: "It's not making the law, but preparing it through opinion; it's making the legislator's work easier, and transforming, as it were, his intentions into decrees in advance: so that all kinds of glory, Messieurs, seem to be reserved for you. Sometimes you support a law that has already been made, by promptly consecrating it by opinion; sometimes it's a law to be made that you prepare by actions, by facts, by a body of conduct that the legislators seem to be asking you for, and which they need in order to achieve all the good that it is in their desire to do. There are no prejudices that can resist this incalculable power of opinion which prepares the law, or of the law which is seconded and consecrated by opinion *."

Clever and perfidious chatterbox! What arrogance and what astuteness! Gum if the legislators of the Constituante asked that the Commune make their mandate easier, by hatching their intentions through decrees from City Hall! Eraser if they needed to be pushed by opinion to do the good they wanted to do! The legislators would gladly have done without the terrible encouragement of the Commune. But legislative power no longer belonged to them. This encouragement taught them only too well!

A few days later, in a petition addressed to the National Assembly, the Jews wrote boldly, alluding to the protection of the Commune's representatives: "We would even dare to say that they anticipate, in a way, the National Assembly

1 Portefeuille de Godard. - Moniteur, February 2, 1790. - Halphen, Recueil des lois concernant les Israélites, p. 199-203. to hasten our civil existence. They are making us citizens, so that this Assembly may declare us so1...".

At the same time, the Courrier de Paris in the provinces published this appeal: "Generous citizens, defend, defend the cause of these good Israelites; they are our brothers. God, the God we worship, brought them out of the land of slavery like us;

"Like us, through a thousand perils, they have crossed the Red Sea, to reach the arid deserts of freedom, which will soon be turned into delightful countryside, flowing with milk and honey; they are our brothers, at last; they want to become our friends, and they will, despite the Rewbells, despite the Maurys118 119 ", etc.

III

When the lawyer Godard delivered the speech we have just reported, the president of the Commune assembly was Abbé Mulot.¹²⁰ It is unlikely that the said Abbé had previously asked his ecclesiastical

superiors for permission to occupy such a chair. What Grégoire, parish priest of Emberménil, was for the Jews in the National Assembly, Abbé Mulot was for the Jews in the Commune assembly. He lived up to his name. When the beavers wanted to build their dam, this mulot helped them gnaw through the obstacles.

He answered the lawyer Godard and the fifty Jewish national guards in these terms:

"You have come, Messieurs, to solicit the assembly of the Commune to issue a vow that seconds, to the nation's legislators, a request you make to them in the name of nature.

"I am proud, Messieurs, both of the fact that I can be the organ of this assembly to you, and of the fact that you are not afraid to appear before it while I am in the chair.

"The distance of your religious opinions from the truths we all profess, as Christians, cannot prevent us, as men, from drawing closer to you; and, if we mutually believe each other to be in error, if it was only noticed by the proposals to prohibit ecclesiastical costume and to suppress gambling houses. Imprisoned for some time during the Terror, he later became a member of the Monuments Commission, commissioner of the Directoire in Mainz, where he taught belles-lettres, and showed himself to be one of the fervent apostles of the theophilanthropic sect. We have quite a number of his writings in a loose, incorrect style; among them: *Essais de sermons prêchés à l'Hôtel-Dieu* (Paris, 1781) ; *Rêve d'un pauvre moine* (Paris, 1789) ; *Discours sur le serment civique* (Paris, 1790) ; *l'A imanach des sans-culottes* (Paris, 1794) ; *Mémoire sur l'état actuel de nos bibliothèques* (Paris, 1797) ; *Essai de poésies légères* (Mayence, 1798) : etc. We also owe him hymns and speeches for republican festivals, translations of Anacreon's *Geese*, *Daphnis* and *C'iloé*, Lockman's *Fables*, and so on.

(Dictionnaire de Pierre Larousse.) mutually we think we should complain, we can love each other.

"I cannot tell you what the precise wishes of the assembly will be on the substance of your request; but I can, at least, assure you both that its decisions will conform to the laws of reason and humanity, and that I will be the first to applaud whatever is determined to be favorable for your nation.

"As a first token of our fraternity, the assembly invites you, and through me, to attend the session¹".

The day after this session, the journal of the municipality and districts of Paris reflected: "Abbé Mulot, in an embarrassing response for a clergyman, was able to reconcile the austerity of his ministry with the intentions of the assembly, of which he was the organ as well as its president. His speech earned general admiration, and the printing of it was ordered "

11 does not deserve ours. It was no longer the priest of the Catholic Church who answered, it was a priest-adventurer. How many giddy ministers have compromised their ministry and sought adventure in the Revolution! Mulot was one of them. They did the Jews' business. Their protection was all the more effective as their presence alongside them was less suspect.

1 Portefeuille de Godard - Moniteur, February 2, 1790. - Halphen, *Recueil*, etc., p.203. - *Le Courrier de Paris dans les provinces*, February 2, 1790, p. 396-7.

2 Journal de la municipalité et des districts de Paris, January 29, 1790, p. 380.

Before the Commune, another abbot also lent the support of his religious character and his word to the cause of the Jews: Abbé Bertolio. At a new session held on this subject at the Hôtel de Ville⁴, when opposition voices were heard against the Jews, Abbé Bertolio silenced the opposition with a fiery reply. He declared in the strongest terms "that it was an error, an error of spirit, to make the quality of citizen depend on religion; also a great error, to mix political questions with religious questions. In order to recognize these errors, and avoid the disaster they brought, it was necessary for an event as happy and unexpected as the Revolution to rejuvenate France.... It is only too true that for centuries, Jews have been the victims of the cruellest persecutions and the most incredible intolerance. But the long duration of their suffering is all the more reason to help them. Let us hasten to make them forget the crimes of our fathers. Let us hasten to restore to the Jews what they should never have lost: their right as citizens,

which is as immutable as the nature that gives it to them^{121 122}." Strange abbot, who forgot the crime of Calvary to shift the accusation of crimes to the Christians! Strange renewal of the world in 89! Placing themselves on the ground of reason and purely human fraternity, the priests themselves came to bracket the trial of Jesus by Caiaphas, and to put their own Christian ancestors on trial for their conduct towards the Jews: Let us hasten to make them forget the crimes of our fathers.

IV

The Commune was thus favorably disposed. But to persuade it to intervene fully with the Assemblée nationale, the Jews, still advised by Godard, tried a bold move. They embarked on a tour of the various districts and neighborhoods of the capital, soliciting and collecting signatures of approval from each district in favor of their emancipation. Four of their number led the tour. L. Godard's portfolio contains curious details of this tour:

For example: it was the Carmelite district that was particularly favorable to the emancipation project. Not only did it welcome the approach of the four canvassers, but it also set about collecting signatures in the other districts^{123,124}.

What's more, he issued the Jews with an extremely flattering certificate of patriotism and good reputation, recommending them first to the Commune assembly, then to the National Assembly¹. In short, the Carmelite district proved so well disposed and took the cause of emancipation to heart, that Godard was able to say, when appearing before the National Assembly: "Gentlemen, I present the Jews to you, not so much as my own clients, but as those of the Carmelite district²".

Godard is convinced that the Jews of the Carmélites district were so well served, and lived on good terms with everyone, that this district was so zealous in promoting their emancipation.

¹ Here is the certificate:

Extrait du procès-verbal des délibérations de l'Assemblée générale
du district des Carmélites.

Friday, January 29, 1790.

The District Assembly, considering that, since the beginning of the Revolution, the Jews living in the district have always behaved with the greatest zeal and the purest and most generous patriotism; Considering that the disastrous prejudice which has hitherto kept them immersed in degradation was not likely to inspire in them the sentiments of good and loyal citizens; that the means of giving all Jews the energy befitting free men is to make them share in this honorable quality;

Considering finally that the Carmelite district, which contains the largest number of Jews, has been, as it still is, in the best position to learn about their political conduct, and to do them justice for the zeal and patriotism they have always shown; believing even that gratitude is due to them;

Unanimously decided to bring to the assembly of Commune representatives the district's wish that the Jews, whose good conduct and complete devotion to public service it attests, should henceforth enjoy the rights of citizens;

Further decided that this decree would be sent to the President of the National Assembly and to the 59 districts.

For an extract in conformity with the original.

Signed: Gavot, one of the secretaries.

(Hali'hen, Recueil, etc., p. 206-7.)

² Godard's portfolio.

An even more curious detail:

On their tour, the four canvassers, supported by the Carmelite district, obtained the unanimous support of the other Paris districts for emancipation, except for one, which stubbornly refused its own. Who would believe it, and who will hold back their smile when they learn of it? it was the district of the

frprieurs. In his notes, lawyer Godard says nothing about it. He even feigns, as a good lawyer, the unanimity of the districts' votes. But this curious exception is attested to by the Jews themselves. "The solicitors first went to the forty-eight sections of Paris, to urge them to support their request. Forty-seven accepted it unanimously: only one refused: that of the "fripiers de la halle"! this refusal requires no explanation L"- "Only the "halle" dealers refused to give their consent, as they feared competition 125 126."

We can't help but reflect on the revolutionary passion that suddenly transforms the hostility of an entire city into support. All but one of the 48 sections of Paris supported the Jews' demand for emancipation. A few years earlier, under Louis XV, the Jews, tolerated in Paris, tried to take steps^ to obtain the right of bourgeoisie.

bourgeoisie, all the merchants and traders of Paris rose up unanimously against the claim of these outcasts. As we write this, we have before us the petition of the six bodies of merchants and traders of Paris against the admission of Jews¹, addressed to His Majesty King Louis XV. Certainly, the poor unfortunates are not presented in attractive colors: "The admission of this species of men," says the merchants' petition, "can only be very dangerous; they can be compared to wasps who enter hives only to kill the bees, open their bellies and extract the honey that is in their entrails; such are the Jews, to whom it is impossible to suppose the qualities of citizens 127 128..." And a little further on: "The admission of this species of men can only be very dangerous; they can be compared to wasps who enter hives only to kill the bees, open their bellies and extract the honey that is in their entrails; such are the Jews, to whom it is impossible to suppose the qualities of citizens 127 128...". And a little further on: "The Christian merchant does his trade alone, each trading house is in some way isolated, whereas the Jews are particles of quicksilver which run, which stray, and which, at the slightest incline, come together in a main block¹²⁹, etc." This was printed around 1760, and all the Paris merchants' bodies were unanimous in signing the petition to repel the Jews. A few years later, in 1789, what did we see? Every district in Paris, with the exception of the "fripiers" district, requesting citizen status for these same Jews. Between these two attitudes in the same city, what had happened? Revolutionary passion. The fripiers were the only ones to show their wisdom.

V

Abbé Mulot, president of the Commune, and the lawyer Godard, are in the presence of the National Assembly (February 25, 1790).

They lead a deputation sent by the Hôtel de Ville. They represent all but one of the 60 districts, and come, therefore, in the name of all these districts, in the name of the entire municipality, to demand the emancipation of the Jews. "All the districts, with the exception of the Halle district, had given their approval L "

Their demand was categorical. History tells us that they had gone to the National Assembly "to ask it, or rather to force it" to sign the decree concerning the Jews ².

In Godard's papers, we found the minutes of the petition he submitted on behalf of the Commune to the National Assembly. Here are a few passages, including a significant admission, perhaps embarrassing for the Jews:

ADDRESS

FROM THE ASSEMBLY OF COMMUNE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

on the admission of jews to the civil register.

Gentlemen,

"The destiny of most of the Kingdom's Jews is still undecided. Perhaps you were expecting a strongly held opinion

1 Gsaetz, t. XI, p. 217.

i Ibid, p. 217.

to strengthen your generous intentions and hasten the moment of your justice. We are pleased to be the first to bring you this opinion: it is not ours alone, it is that of the many districts of this capital; and it is the whole of Paris that is speaking to you at this moment through us.

"At the very moment of the Revolution, the Jews of Paris

their courage, their zeal, their patriotism, have earned the right to public recognition.

"We have seen them with us, decorated with the national sign, helping us to conquer - and they are still helping us to preserve - our common heritage.

"Ah, gentlemen, if they have contributed to the conquest of freedom, can they be condemned not to enjoy their own work? If they are true citizens, on what pretext should they be denied the title? We dare say they would deserve it as a reward, if it were not due to them as an act of justice.

" In the name of humanity and the fatherland, in the name of the social qualities of the Jews, of their patriotic virtues, of their keen love of freedom, we beg you to give them the title and rights of which it would be unjust for them to be deprived any longer. We regard them as our brothers, we long to call them our fellow citizens, Ail! we already treat them as such; our interest makes us need to be confused with them, our interest gives us the right to demand your justice for them and for us. Speed up their happiness and ours.

Arrested by us commissioners appointed by the Commune. Hôtel de Ville, February 24, 1790.

Signed: Godard *,

l'abbé Bertolio,

Du VEYRIER,

l'abbé Fauchet^{130 131}."

This rather imperative petition is extremely curious. With the president of the Commune, Abbé Mulot, leading the deputation, that made three priests out of five deputies, who came to demand the emancipation of the Jews.

Note also this phrase, this admission, embarrassing perhaps, as we said, for the Jews: they contributed to the conquest of freedom. The Commune itself declared this, and used it as a basis for obtaining emancipation for its clients from the National Assembly. It asserts that the Jews have contributed to the conquest of freedom. He mixed his Christian principles with mystical reveries and the ideas of a reformer; this priest, with his stormy, passionate voice, was also a tribune and even a warrior. On July 14th 1789, he was one of the electors gathered at the Hôtel de Ville. On that day, he harangued the people and marched at the head of a column, saber in hand, to attack the Bastille; three times he brought back the attackers, scattered by the fire of the fortress. - Charged by the Commune to deliver the eulogy for the citizens who had died in battle, he took as the text of his speech the words of St. Paul: "Vos enim ad libertatem eoeati estis, Brothers, you are called to liberty. What was entirely new in this ceremony was that the l re'dicateur had himself ^contributed to the conquest he was celebrating; he had found himself in the midst of those whose memory he was honoring; he had incurred the same peril and shown the same intrepidity. Reports of the time record the prodigious effect of this speech on an audience dominated by the same passions and spirit as the orator. A civic crown was awarded to him, and one was immediately procured; a herald carried it before him to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was surrounded by all the officers of the district, between two companies marching with drums beating and ensigns unfurled. - During the blessing of the district flags. Fauchet was also commissioned to deliver the patriotic sermon addressed to the citizen soldiers; he also published various opuscles designed to propagate his doctrine of the union of Christianity and new ideas, including: *De la Religion nationale*, 1789; *Sermon sur l'accord de la religion et de la liberté*, 1791.

Dictionnaire de Pierre Larousse. say, except that they may have had a hand in all the serious events of 1789 and 1790?

Let us note, finally, this word of abasement of the signatories: "Our interest makes us a need to be confused with them." Unfortunately, this was a prophecy. How many degenerate Christians would later have no qualms about being confused with the Jews! The signatories even called it "a need". After these remarks, made to enlighten the reader, let's pick up the thread of the story with him.

Such, then, was the deputation sent by the Commune, in the name of the districts of Paris: a small troop determined to win the emancipation of the Jews that day.

But that day, too, the chair of the National Assembly was occupied by Talleyrand.

Talleyrand was undoubtedly in favor of the Jews. Nevertheless, their admission to civil rights seemed to him, and to many others, to be fraught with consequences.

As a skilful man, he courteously welcomed the deputation, listened to a touching plea from Abbé Mulot, received the Commune's petition from Godard's hands, and replied: "The National Assembly has made it its sacred duty to restore to all men their rights; it decrees the conditions necessary to be an active citizen; it is in this spirit that it will examine, in its justice, the reasons that you set out, in such a touching way, in favor of the Jews. The National Assembly invites you to attend the session L "

1 Moniteur du Rr mars 1790,

In the session of the following day (February 26), the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, very sympathetic to the Israelites, was already asking the Assembly to set a day when it would deal with their admission to civil status, when a deputy rose and replied: "I observe that the question relating to the Jews is, no doubt, very important, but that we have more important questions... I ask for the adjournment of the question on Jews L" This deputy remains unknown.

But, on his observation, in line with the secret wishes of most of the deputies, the question was again adjourned.

And so, fifty-nine districts out of sixty (i.e. all of Paris represented), had requested, demanded the entry of Jews into civil society, and the Constituante had refused: considerable proof of the repugnance and fear inspired by this solution.

VI

From February 26, 1790 to May 7, 1791, three new attempts were made with the Constituante; but the result was always either an adjournment or thin concessions^{132 133}.

Discouraged and embittered, the plaintiffs officially turned to the Commune for a second time.

It was Talleyrand who gave them the opportunity. Was he or was he not an accomplice? In any case, the Jews, as clever and cleverer than he, took advantage of his famous report on freedom of worship.

Here's how it happened:

On Talleyrand's report, the National Assembly had decreed complete freedom of worship, and consequently freedom to erect religious buildings.

Until then, Jews had kept their oratories to themselves. Their religious ceremonies were tolerated, but performed far from the main road. A synagogue had no place visible to the sun like a Catholic church.

But Talleyrand decreed complete freedom of worship. As expeditious men, the Jews, taking immediate advantage of both Talleyrand's report and the Assembly's decree, acquired a spacious building for the exercise of their religion, displayed their religious ceremonies in broad daylight, and then came to propose, with their complaints and moans, this argument to the General Council of the Commune:

"Our religious slavery has ceased, but our civil slavery still lasts. And yet, if we have received from the law the right to build synagogues, can we not also receive from it the title and rights of citizens? Can we be citizens only in our synagogues, and strangers and slaves outside them? Wouldn't it be contradictory if the law recognized us on the one hand, and denied us on the other? There can be no half-freedom,

just as there can be no half-justice".

This request from the Jews to the Commune's General Council ended as follows: "It is the city of Paris that has begun, as it were, the reign of freedom for the Jews; it is up to it to complete, through its intercession with the legislators, a work worthy of its patriotism and enlightenment^{134 135}."

The municipality of Paris not only did not remain insensitive to the request, but also wanted to be consistent with the conclusions of Talleyrand's report. It immediately issued the following decree:

DECREE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PARIS

ilu 26 m ai 1791.

The Municipal Body, penetrated by the justice of the request that the Jews are renewing with such honorable perseverance:

Stop,

That a new letter will be written to the National Assembly to place before its eyes both the request of the Jews and the wish of the municipality, and to urge it to formally extend to the Jews of the capital the consequence of the beneficent principles it has just enshrined concerning freedom of religious opinion.

Signed: Bailly, mayor.

de Joly, secretary-registrar.

These words "to urge it to formally extend" obviously contained a threat to the Assembly.

Nevertheless, the Constituent Assembly still felt strong enough to resist, and so it did. The Jewish question was once again postponed.

VII

11 There was an inflexible logician at the Constituante: Duport (Du Port).

Although a member of the nobility, Duport had been a member of the Revolution. After the storming of the Bastille, he had pushed for disorder, in order to *sillonner profond*, he said, i.e. to ensure the Revolution. A dark enthusiast of the time, he cried out at the Assembly: "We are not working for France alone, but for all nations. All peoples listen to us. We are the avengers and preceptors of the human race." 11 was a member of the Jacobin Club^{136 137}. His authority was great at the Constituante, where he formed, with Laineth and Barnave, a triumvirate that had inherited Mirabeau's popularity.

It was to him that the Jews turned to fight the decisive battle, and draw from the Declaration of the Rights of Man the supreme deduction that had so struggled to emerge from it.

It has to be said that they were tenacious, and above all good logicians;

Tenacious, because in the space of two years, i.e. during the entire duration of the Constituante, the question of their emancipation had been presented fourteen times by them, dismissed and postponed fourteen times by the legislators, and they were still there to put it to them.

Adrien Duport with a deep sigh; I've given it a lot of thought... I know some sure things... but they're of such a nature that I shudder to think of them myself, and I won't be able to decide to share them with you until you approve of my entire plan, until you're convinced that it's essential to adopt it, and that there's no other way to ensure not only the success of the Revolution, but also the salvation of the State...". After arousing the curiosity of his listeners, he added: "It is only by means of terror that one succeeds in putting oneself at the head of a revolution and in governing it. There is not a single case, in any country, that I cannot cite in support of this truth. So, however reluctant we all may be, we must sign up to the sacrifice of a few prominent people..." Leduc de la Rochefoucauld was struck by Adrien Duport's reflections and, like all the other members of the committee, ended up adopting the plan and means of execution he proposed. Instructions in line with this plan were given to the principal agents of the insurrections committee, which was already organized and to which Adrien Duport was no stranger.

Execution soon followed. The massacre of MM. de Launay, de Flesselles, Foulon and Berthier, and their heads carried around on pikes, were the first tests of this philanthropic conspiracy. >Bertrand de Molleville, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. IV. p. 181 et suiv. – Louis Blanc, in [*Histoire de la Révolution française*, t. II, p. 318, also credits Duport with organizing the massacres in Paris and the panic in the provinces. – It was therefore to this terrible sectarian that the Jews, tired of so many postponements, turned to be summarily introduced into society.

They presented themselves for the fifteenth time on the eve of the dissolution of the Assembly; Good logicians, because they demanded that logical consequences be drawn from the Declaration, which they did not want to see there. The legislators of 1789, disdaining the old Christianity, had wanted to build their new society on the model of mathematics. They boasted about it. Condorcet wrote: "The methods of the mathematical sciences, applied to new objects, have opened new roads to political and moral sciences. Jean-Jacques, in *The Social Contract*, had gone so far as to calculate mathematically the fraction of sovereignty that belonged to each individual. Well, when it came to mathematics, the Jews had a lot to teach anyone in this self-proclaimed new world. So, given the Declaration of the Rights of Man, they stood by, stubbornly determined to draw a consequence for their own benefit – every consequence!

So it was the eve of the closing. It was the penultimate session. There was no more time to lose, no more reprieve to accept. Duport rose and, in the midst of a solemn silence, uttered the following words: "I believe that freedom of worship no longer allows any distinction to be made between the political rights of citizens on the basis of their beliefs. The question of the political existence of the Jews has been adjourned; however, Turks, Muslims and men of all sects are admitted to enjoy political rights in France. I ask that the adjournment be revoked, and that consequently it be decreed that Jews will enjoy in France the rights of active citizens¹."

Rewbell, the stubborn opponent of the Israelites, wanted to fight Duport's proposal.

But Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, cutting him off, exclaimed: "I demand that all those who speak against this proposal be called to order, for it is the Constitution itself that they will be fighting^{138 139}."

When a body of troops retreats, if it can be thrown against an obstacle to destroy it or force it to surrender, it is said, in *terme de guerre*, to be cornered. This was the 'no-win' situation for the Constituante, at the advanced hour of its retreat. It was 'faced with a choice: either lay down its arms to the Jews, or destroy the Constitution, its work, which for the Constituante was tantamount to destroying itself before history. It was cornered.

The famous Declaration of the Rights of Man had become a dead end. The Assembly remained silent in the face of Régnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély's apostrophe. Victory remained with the Jews.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO COMPARE HERE

LOUIS XVI'S ENTERPRISE

AND THE UNDERTAKING OF THE REVOLUTION

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE ISRAELITES

I. The comparison between the royal and revolutionary solutions to the Jewish question casts a vivid light on the course of modern events. – II. King Louis XVI's approach to this solution; the Revolution's approach. – III. First major difference: of these two modes of emancipation, gradual emancipation and complete and immediate emancipation, Louis XVI would have adopted the first; the Revolution imposed the other, despite public opinion, despite Alsace, despite the Constituante itself: it was in the spirit of the Revolution! – IV. Explanation of these words: "in the spirit of the Revolution". It showed, on the occasion of the Jewish question, its spirit of incontinence. – V. Terrible disadvantages of this mode of emancipation, predicted by Godard as early as 1789. – VI. A second and even more serious

difference: the Revolution based the emancipation of the Jews on the rights of man. Had Louis XVI been free, he would never have chosen such a basis, disastrous beyond belief. Comparisons that help us understand. – VIL M. de Bonald's judgment on the Constituent Assembly's act concerning the Jews: how right it is to complete' this judgment.

I

We now know all the details of the great labor. Les démarches que les juifs ont dû faire, les moyens qu'ils ont mis en oeuvre, les hommes à la protection dont ils ont eu recours, toute la persévérance qu'ils ont déployé, tous les sentiers qu'ils ont essayés, toute l'adresse et toutes les ressources qu'ils ont dépensées, enfin leur succès complet dû à la Commune: le lecteur connaît tout cela. He knows the truth.

Well, now, before exposing the great day of emancipation, we're going to gather ourselves in austere impartiality. What's the point? This is the moment to compare Louis XVI's undertaking concerning the Jews with the undertaking of the Revolution. We need to ask ourselves what, in all probability, would have been the solution adopted by Louis XVI had he peacefully completed his undertaking, and what, on the other hand, was the solution adopted by the Revolution. Royal solution, revolutionary solution: who can fail to see at once how important the differences will be, if we find any? They will give us the means to penetrate the secret of many clashing, bizarre and even disturbing aspects of the modern situation of Christians and Jews.

So let's reconcile and discern:

Louis XVI undertook, as did the Revolution, and even long before it, the emancipation and rehabilitation of the Israelites; he was indisputably the first to love them! We have amply demonstrated this.

lisent – the monarch and the Revolution, both – the entry of the Israelites into society, their participation in the civil life of peoples. Malesherbes in the name of Louis XVI, Mirabeau in the name of the Revolution, were the two organs of this express will. That's not the difficulty.

Where is the difficulty?

In this proposition:

Entry of the Israelites into society, participation by them in civil life; but to what extent?

"To a certain extent, at least in the beginning", would have answered the government of Louis XVI, had it been free;

"Without measure", replied the Revolution.

II

What was Louis XVI's viewpoint in undertaking the emancipation of the Israelites? What other points of view did the Revolution take into account?

Louis XVI, as a very Christian king, did not abandon the horizons of Christianity when he set out to emancipate the Israelites. He held to them, and aimed to rehabilitate and rejoice these unfortunate people, precisely because Christianity, as the repository of mercy, discerns in the centuries the opportune moment to apply it.

The Revolution took no account of this religious principle. It saw in the Jews only fallen men who had to be raised up alongside other men; its enterprise was purely humanitarian.

Louis XVI was not only* a very Christian king, but also a vigilant father of the Christian people. In this capacity, he sought, by being merciful and liberal towards the Jews, not to compromise the interests of the Christian people. His magnanimity was far-sighted. In wanting to adopt the Jews as his children, he was careful not to undermine or expose the position of his other Catholic children, doubly dear to his heart, because they were dear to the Church;

The Revolution, whose head wears the Phrygian bonnet as its emblem, never had any idea of these delicate situations.

Finally, in studying the emancipation of the Israelites, Louis XVI was concerned about the future of France;

The Revolution had only one concern: Alsace, devoured by usurers. It reproached the Jews only for their habits and the vices inherent in long servitude. Louis XVI saw in them a deeper hostility, more difficult to eradicate: religious hostility.

These are the general points of view under which, in the same liberal enterprise, both Louis XVI and the Revolution appear. In light of them, we shall see the profound differences between the royal solution that was being prepared, and the revolutionary solution that prevailed.

III

There were two modes of emancipation.

Gradual emancipation;

complete and immediate emancipation.

The first consisted in gradually initiating these men, who had never before been part of society, into the d 'voirs and rights of citizenship. They will learn about freedom and equality. They will rise, as if by degrees, to the full exercise of civil life. The legislator will make perfect citizenship a reward for the fulfillment of the first social duties.

But what were the concessions, and what were the reservations, of this gradual emancipation?

Various rather vague projects had been submitted? One of them (1790) formulated these concessions and reservations as follows:

"That the Jew be a citizen in all respects in which he will not be a harmful citizen, very good;

"That all the rights in the exercise of which our laws can monitor his conscience be granted to him without distinction, very good;

"For example, that he may live anywhere in the kingdom;

Jewish Pre-Jomerism.

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"To vote in the nation's primary assemblies, to elect representatives, and to participate with other citizens in the drafting of instruction manuals;

"Hold a place in public and communal deliberations;

"Acquire a house to live in with his family;

"That he may be admitted to all liberal and mechanical arts guilds; trade, farm, cultivate, lease land and even acquire real estate;

"Finally, let him worship freely, as long as he does not disturb the peace;

"All this is possible, even charitable, and must be generously granted to new citizens.

"But under no circumstances should Jews be eligible for political, administrative or judicial bodies. That is to say, he must not be vested (V with any of those important and delicate functions over which the principles of Christian morality must always preside¹⁴⁰.

Such was gradual emancipation, with its reservations and precautions.

Complete and immediate emancipation, on the other hand, consisted in cutting out all intermediaries, declaring the Jew a perfect citizen, and saying to him: "From now on, you belong to society, and society belongs to you.

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The leaders among the Jews – Gerfberr, Berr-Isaac-Berr and the Bataillon des Juifs Parisiens being the most prominent – were extremely apprehensive about gradual emancipation, its reservations and its temperaments. Their most important memorandum, addressed to the Constituent Assembly on January 28, 1790, strongly condemned and fought against it:

"The right of citizenship must be granted to the Jews, without restriction and without delay; it would be

both unjust and dangerous to try to prepare them to receive it by gradual improvements, and it would also be unjust and dangerous not to clothe them with it with the greatest promptitude...

"... Would it be right to deprive them of their rights, to condemn them to isolation and opprobrium, because there are debased Jews among them? If these are not yet worthy, they will become so. If they are not yet worthy, must we deprive the others?

"Justice rejects all temperaments.

"Now consider the disadvantages that would result:

"By delaying the moment of civilization for the Jews, your temperaments would have the object of giving them special laws... But, we say it loud and clear: the more of these special regulations you make, the more you fortify the dividing line that has hitherto existed between Jews and Christians; whereas common efforts must tend to Veffacer entirely."

1 Pétition 'les juifs à l'Assemblée nationale' 23 janvier 1790. p. 10, p. 92-93.

This memorandum, addressed } by the Jews to the National Assembly, and signed Cerfberr and Berr-Isaac-Berr, was written by their dear friend the lawyer Godard¹.

We could reply to him and to them that the question was precisely whether it was opportune to erase the demarcation line completely, to bring down the wall of separation entirely. Wouldn't there be any danger in abruptly destroying the wall? Wouldn't it be wise, on the contrary, to first open communication gates?

These are the gates that Louis XVI would have kindly opened, allowing the Israelites to enter, in groups, into the civil life of France, albeit with reservations. It seems clear to us, in fact, that Louis XVI did not think of complete emancipation the first time around. The wise conduct of the monarch and the circumspect spirit of the French monarchy leave no doubt as to the precautions that would have surrounded the royal benefit. We proved this abundantly in our first book^{141 142}.

But here is an important remark on this gradual emancipation:

That the Christian monarchy opted for this mode of emancipation is hardly surprising;

That the old Jews of the Ghetto looked askance at any emancipation announced to them, however gradual, and did not share the impatience of their leaders: this was still natural; these old Jews, petrified and dry as bones on the road of centuries, feared, for all sorts of good reasons, the unknown of civil resurrection¹;

It was to be expected that Alsace, which was following the ups and downs of this rising Hebrew tide with terrible anxiety and exasperation, would cry out: "Des degrés, des barrages!

But what will come as a surprise, and by the same token a considerable boost to the party of gradual emancipation, is that this project counted among its supporters the most ardent friend of the Jews, Abbé Grégoire, and better still, almost the entire Constituent Assembly;

Grégoire had written: the need to prepare Jews and Christians for this reform; the time needed to bring it about; he called for two generations ^{143 144} ;

And, with the exception of Mirabeau¹⁴⁵ , the Constituent Assembly was of the same opinion: the proof is that it hesitated to issue a decree and, seeking to gain time, haggled, crumbling emancipation by granting a few concessions, from time to time, to the plaintiffs.

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So there you have it, on the side of gradual emancipation, the whole of public opinion, broken down in this way: the King, the old Talmudic Jews, Alsace, Grégoire, the Constituante. But then, how did it happen - astonishingly and unexpectedly - that the solution was quite different, that it was total emancipation, without guarantees, without conditions? There can only ever be one answer: this result was in the spirit of the Revolution!

A solution imbued with wisdom, moderation, slowness and prudence was not possible for the Revolution. It would have been at odds with the spirit of incontinence and outburst that was beginning to reveal itself¹⁴⁶. If it had adopted gradual emancipation, i.e. tempered, prudent emancipation, it would no longer have been the Revolution. It showed, on the contrary, what it was, by decreeing a fiery emancipation, i.e. immediate and total.

IV

"But it's slander and obscurantism to make such a judgment!

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when they read these lines.

No, gentlemen, we are not slandering; God has given us the grace to judge 'justly. Reflect, yourselves, on this contrast which has struck us singularly:

Here is an Assembly - the Constituent Assembly - which for the duration of its existence (a mere two years) has been dealing with this serious question;

This Assembly, so enthusiastic, so expeditious in its dealings, takes up this question up to fourteen times, without settling it; it is repugnant to it even to settle it;

When it does decide on a solution, there is only one voice to tell it in what direction; the monarch says: Gradual emancipation; the Israelites' warmest supporter, Abbé Grégoire, says: Gradual emancipation; the whole of Alsace cries out: No emancipation! but, if it has to be that way, gradual, only gradual; the Jews themselves, for the most part, want no other;

Public opinion therefore awaits gradual emancipation;

And then, all of a sudden, this Assembly, which has struggled, stiffened, against a solution to be given, which has refused it many times, gives it, and, in this solution, drops everything, sacrifices everything, itself and public opinion!

As we firmly reiterate, only the revolutionary spirit can bring about such theatrical coups. The Revolution dominated and led the Constituent Assembly. It said: "You had judged like this, but you'll decide like this!

Have we slandered?

"The Revolution did well to impose its decision; it did well to wrest the decree from the hands of Louis XVI, and even from the hands of the Constituent Assembly, at a time when the emancipation decreed was only going to be gradual; it did well: for Louis XVI had set a goal, a limit; the Revolution, in its momentum, exceeded that goal! With Louis XVI, freedom would have had its reservations; with the Revolution, it didn't: it was freedom!

We reply:

It's true, with the Revolution, the goal was exceeded; or, at least, the time we wanted to give to initiation, to learning about freedom, was devoured. The Revolution has not only devoured centuries, as Comte de Maistre so aptly put it; it has also devoured the intermediaries, but has this suppression of intermediaries been Nubian?

Our conviction is that it was a disaster.

A contemporary of 1791, a friend of Godard's, had the following to say

1 Abbé Grégoire said of the edict given by Joseph II in favor of the Jews of Austria at almost the same time: "It has the defect of crossing the intermediaries." - (Motion en faveur des juifs, by Grégoire, p. 39).

Godard had the courage to predict this disaster and to help him foresee it.

Godard had acquired, in the trade of his clients, a forehead of brass, and a neck like an iron bar. A burgher from the Saint-Roch district, this close friend of Godard's had been publicly called by him "a man of prejudice, lacking in common sense", because he had taken a contrary view to his own on the question of the Jews:

He wrote to him:

"... Be convinced of one truth, and that is that your clients "will never win their case soon enough according to my "wishes. I shall gladly see the day when the Jews are "compensated. But I won't be truly satisfied (and "I'm speaking to you as a true citizen) until their ad- "mission has been pronounced by the National Assembly "only after it has foreseen, ruled out the "terrible disadvantages that would result from a similar favor, "hastily and thoughtlessly granted.

"Adieu, mon ami, sou viens-toi (et en convenons une fois pour toutes), que notre attachement peut durer " sans que nos opinions se ressemblent, et que, lorsque " je me sera forcé, dans le district de Saint-Roch, d'ouvrir " un avis sur quelque objet que ce soit, il me sera per- " mis de ne m'en tenir pas à celui que tu auras eu dans " le district des Blancs-Manteaux."

Your friend: Billuart '.

Paris, February 11, 1790.

1 This unpublished letter is part of Godard's portfolio.

This letter thus read:

"D'une faveur semblable, précipitamment et inconsidérément accordée, résulteraient des inconvénients terribles;"

Ninety-nine years on, the reader can judge whether Godard's friend was mistaken, and whether the inconveniences are slight¹⁴⁷!

VI

Historians have pointed out this first difference, which we have just described: patient and gradual emancipation with Louis XVI, fiery and total with the Revolution. There is a second, more serious, more profound difference, which historians have unfortunately overlooked; or perhaps they thought it prudent to keep quiet about it?

We have put the Declaration of the Rights of Man on trial, with such merciless criticism as to tire even the eyes and mind of the reader; but here is the coup de grâce:

The Revolution based and supported the emancipation of the Jews on the rights of man; Louis XVI, had he been free, would never have chosen such a basis.

What basis would the monarch have chosen?

- We answer: Christian public law¹⁴⁸.

- But why wouldn't he have accepted human rights as a basis?

- Because, on the one hand, in the heart of a French king, and especially of a monarch like Louis XVI, there was the most attentive, tender and far-sighted solicitude for the interests of the Christian people, and, on the other hand, this far-sighted solicitude would have made him realize at once the dangers that could result, for his people, from an emancipation of the Jews based on human rights. Here we come to the most delicate, the most important, point of this great question. Please consider the following:

At first sight, human rights seemed to be a neutral ground, a transaction, where the Christian and the Jew, long bitter enemies, could finally meet and get along. But let us beware: by adopting /wmm^, V humanity, as the basis of his encounter with the Jew, the Christian necessari- renient was descending, not out of humility, but out of forgetfulness of his Christian dignity; he was degrading himself; he was lowering himself, to meet at the level of the Jew who, on the contrary, was rising and rising again. Yes, we'll have the courage to say it, of all his contracts or exchanges with the Hebrews, the Christian never made a more blind or disastrous one. It was the abandonment of the. over natural. that not only heavenly, but earthly advantage which came to him from Christ, and which made him superior; he rejected the evangelical pearl¹⁴⁹ !...

This consequence, disastrous in the individual sphere, was preparing, even more disastrous, in the social sphere. Indeed:

By declaring that in politics he was a man like the Christian, and that the Christian was in no way superior to him and had no rights other than those he himself possessed, the Israelite was going to be authorized to present himself everywhere, to compete or intrigue everywhere, to compete for any position in society. No one will be able to forbid, withhold or bar him from anything. If circumstances or ambition bring him close to the throne, or even to the highest rank, who can deny him access? who has the right to do so? 11 is a man, a citizen, a pretender, just like everyone else!

Two comparisons will demonstrate the peril of a similar emancipation based on the insane Declaration of the Rights of Man:

The first: the famous sow's horse. We made it the subject of a whole chapter at the beginning of this book, to attract and focus attention. It's worth reading again. The Declaration of the Rights of Man was the Trojan Horse of French society. Instead of the Greeks, the modern Hebrews have emerged.

Second comparison: the serpent's head and its rings;

"The movements of the serpent differ from those of all other animals; one cannot say where the principle of its development lies; for it has neither fins, nor feet, nor wings, and yet it flees like a shadow, it magically vanishes, it reappears and disappears again, like a little azure smoke or the flashes of a sword in the darkness*." Beneath this poetry, here's the real thing:

The serpent has such elasticity, such agility, that, as soon as its head has passed somewhere, it immediately drags all the rings along. It's the head that opens the way for the rest of the body. *Caput serpentis observa*", says a Father of the Church, "observes the head of the serpent. It is this that must be crushed as soon as it appears, for if the head passes through the slightest opening, all the rings have immediately passed through with it 150 151."

The learned and perceptive bishop follows up his remark with a fine moral application: "In temptations," he says, "if an evil thought presents itself to the mind, it's the serpent's head that appears! If, unfortunately, you let it into your mind, if you let it pass, all the rest of the temptation will pass through and settle in your heart... Crush the head, stop the evil thought and you will avoid the other disadvantages of temptation: *caput calca, et évadés cæleros motus*."

Following on from the moral application of the great evoque, we dare to point out its social application: The Declaration of the Rights of Man was, for French society, the head of the snake. With such a principle will pass, and pass quickly, the most unexpected, unheard-of, fearsome consequences, veritable reptile rings: among these rings, the vitality and preponderance of the Jews.

Ali! in writing these lines, it is certainly not our intention to equate Israel with the crawling animal. Far be it from us to do so! We merely wish to point out that the Declaration of the Rights of Man has been, to the entry of the Jews into society, what the head of the serpent is to the rings of its body. The rights of man led to the entry of the Jews, as the head of which we speak leads to one ring, then two, then all the others. With extraordinary volubility, they became citizens, as soon as the pernicious principle was admitted; and citizens today, they will be masters tomorrow, they already are! We defy refutation!

If any Israelite reader has been shocked by the comparison we have had to use, we beg with all our heart the One represented by the brazen serpent to heal the wound made by our pen!

Such was the immense peril of an emancipation based on human rights. In 1791, many foresaw and feared it. The Constituent Assembly foresaw it better than anyone, since it was still hesitating, and since the resounding clamors of Alsace never ceased to warn it; but, let's face it, the Assembly didn't have the courageous humility to admit to itself that it had made a mistake, that its Declaration of Rights was dangerous, and, not having had the courage of this admission, it didn't have, either, that of breaking, with loyal and French hands, the fatal instrument it had made! ...

Is it now necessary to prove at length that Louis XVI, had he been free, would never have chosen such a

basis for emancipation? Ah! he loved the Church too much, the Christian people too much! When the Estates General asked him to sanction the Constitution of 1789, he made this reservation: "I don't explain myself on the Declaration of the Rights of Man; it contains very good maxims to guide your work; but it contains principles susceptible to different applications and even interpretations¹". And later, in the Temple prison, the royal prisoner wrote on his will: "I pray God to receive the deep repentance I have for having put my name (even though it was against my will) to acts which may be contrary to the discipline and belief of the Catholic Church², a Such an e nancipation of the Jews, so formidable in its point of

1 l'oujoulat, Histoire de la l'evolulion. p. 121. .

2 Ibid, p. 321.

Louis XVI would never have chosen it, nor adopted it of his own accord. Yes, he would have adopted a mode of emancipation that was honorable for the Israelites, but at the same time tutelary for the Christian people. In a word, as King of France and very Catholic, he would have acted with the tact of the situation. The Revolution did not have this tact, nor could it have!

This, if you think about it, is what will always distinguish the acts of the Christian monarchy from those of the impious Revolution. A French king brought tact to affairs; the French Revolution replaced it with brutality. The Jewish question is palpable proof of this. With perfect tact, Louis XVI went step by step, degree by degree, towards this emancipation; he loved the poor Jews, he wanted them to be free, enlightened and happy, but at the same time he was jealously careful not to compromise the interests of his Christian subjects. He sought an honorary rapprochement for some, a tutelary one for others: he succeeded. The Revolution, as a proud parvenu y, said to the Jews: "Enter", without worrying whether, with this entry, would not coincide the exit and the withering away of Christian and French influence. Supposing she had foreseen this, she must have felt an infernal joy!

Between the king and the Revolution, poor Assamblée Constituante thought like the king, in this question of the Jews; and yet she emancipated them as the Revolution wanted;

"Oh never goes so far as when you don't know where you're going." Cromwell said that;

This is the story of the Assembly of 17tS9.

In proclaiming the famous rights of man as the basis of society, the Assembly had no thought of the Jews. By the time it saw them and tried to stop them, it was too late. With the serpent's head, that first ring had passed, and many more were to follow!

VII

M. de Donald judged the act of the Constituante concerning the Israelites. His opusculé, entitled Sur les Juifs, throws lightning bolts;

Lightning, as in illumination, and lightning, as in anger;

Here are the one and the other:

"The Assembly³ declared them active citizens: a title which, with the contemplation of the newly decreed rights of man, was then regarded as the highest degree of honor and beatitude to which a human creature could lay claim!

"...But the Jews were rejected by our mores much more than they were oppressed by our laws.

"The Assembly made the enormous and deliberate mistake of putting its laws in contradiction with morals.

"Jews were soon to be called upon to participate in power itself.

" ... Inconsiderate legislators!

I.a Jewish preponderance.

<(...Let care be taken that the emancipation of the Jews does not turn to the oppression of the Christians.

"...Christians may be deceived by Jews, but they must not be governed by them;
 ". This dependence offends their dignity, even more than the Jews' greed offends their interests L "
 To these lightning bolts that illuminate, but pierce, let us attach one that descends from God's justice:
 "Abstract man" was invented by a superb society to get rid of Jesus Christ;
 From this same "abstract man" came the Jews;
 And it so happened that, Christ no longer counting in the government of this society, the deceivers
 found an open road to become governors!
 Monsieur de Bonald, you said, with a biting style: "Christians may be deceived by Jews, but they must
 not be governed by them." If the deceivers are taking their place among the governors, whose fault is
 that? To the Christians of the Constituante, who dismissed the Homine- Dieu!
 O Louis XVI, why weren't you allowed to live, and to govern!
 1 (Entres de M. de Bonald, Mélanges littéraires, politiques et philosophiques, t. I, pages 309, 371, 378,
 380.

CHAPTER IX

EMANCIPATION DAY

ISRAELITES ADMITTED TO FRENCH SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 27, 1791

1. The day of September 27 and the emancipation decree. – II The sombre aspect of this day: at the
 same time as it decreed the entry of Jews into French society, the /ls- semblée constituante accepted the
 homage of Voiey's book on Ruins. The Jews will, in fact, make their entry through immense rubble. –
 III. Comparison with Israel's ancient entry into the Promised Land through the crumbling walls of
 Jericho. Differences between the two situations – IV. The providential aspect of this same day: triple
 change in the existence of the old Hebrew people. – V. First, he breaks the yoke. What yoke? – VI.
 Secondly, he ceases his centuries-old isolation, and becomes a member of universal society. – VII Third,
 he is mandated by Providence. – VIII. Eternal thanks to France for having been the instrument of this
 transformation.

Let us broaden the horizons of our thinking: here we are, facing the grave and solemn day of
 emancipation. It is a day with broad outlines; and if it has been announced with dark revolutionary hues,
 it must also have providential and reassuring ones.

The date is September 27, 1791; the venue is the Salle du Manège, near the Tuileries, where the
 Constituent Assembly held its penultimate session.

We have recounted above (chap. vu. p. 217-20) what happened inside the room: the supreme tcntative
 of the Jews, the support of Jacobin Duport, the capitulation of the Assembly. But what was happening
 outside the hall was no less exciting¹⁵².

A poet of renown in Germany, Louis NVihl, has depicted with striking color the expectation of all
 listening Israel, in the guise of the Wandering Jew, at the door of the Assembly: we borrow from him
 this page of great effect:

A man in ancient costume listens at the door of the assembly of peoples. His face betrays deep pain, the
 snow from his beard streaming down his chest.

His gaze is fixed, strange, like that of a marble statue. 11 pushes his long hair away from his ear: shyly
 huddled in the corner of the door, he listens breathlessly, as if a single word uttered in the hall were to
 end his hereditary suffering and, after a fatigue of two thousand years, finally grant rest to his long
 journeys. In his right hand is a book, for his salvation or condemnation;
 in his left hand is a staff, for life or death.

An obscure and mystical enigma, still unexplained to this day.

"The stag stalked by the hunter,

"finally succumbs in its flight,
"when he dashes headlong into the waves,
"and plunges into it covered in blood.
"I am the beast hunted, forced, chased across the world.
"In storms of fire and sea,
"I sought death in vain.
"11 I had to live, to exist
"and never see freedom!
"But now I see the dawn
"that delivers me from all my ills, that heals me of all my sufferings.

Thus speaks the deeply moved old man;
11 listens: something stirs in the room.
11 listens; a word bursts forth in a loud voice:

"All hoiHjnes are equal;
may Ahasver be delivered
from his eternal evil and his eternal pain 153!"

11 There is greatness in this poetry. But it's good to follow it with the practical, authentic act of emancipation. We transcribe it, as we found it in the National Archives; it is common to Louis XVI and the Constituent Assembly:

Louis, by the grace of God and the constitutional law of the State, King of the French: To all present and future, greetings.

The National Assembly has decided, and we will and order the following:

1) E C R E T 1) E L'AS S E M B L É E N A T I O N A L E
OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1791

The National Assembly, considering that the conditions necessary to be a French citizen and to become an active citizen are fixed by the Constitution, and that any man who, meeting the said conditions, takes the civic oath and undertakes to fulfill all the duties imposed by the Constitution, is entitled to all the advantages it provides;

Revoke all adjournments, reservations and exceptions inserted in the preceding decrees, with respect to Jewish individuals who take the civic oath.

Mandate and order all administrative bodies and courts, that the present decrees be recorded in their registers, read, published and posted in their respective departments and jurisdictions, and executed as the law of the kingdom. In witness whereof we have signed these presents, to which we have affixed the seal of the State.

Signed: LOUIS.

And sealed with the State seal.

And below, M. L. F. Du Port.

When this decree became known, immense emotion swept through all the synagogues, not only in France, but also abroad. Louis A Vild's poetry was not entirely a fiction, the fine ear of the Juif-Errant had bent down at the door of the Assembly!

The jolt felt by Israel in the midst of its dispersion bore some resemblance to that felt in Europe at the news of American independence. It has been said of American independence, when it became known: "Among the men who, from all the remotest corners of old Europe, felt so moved by the news of what a small people of the New World was doing, no one quite understood the deep and secret cause of the emotion he felt, but all ('recounted this distant noise as a sign; what it announced, they did not yet know. It was like the voice of John crying out from the depths of the desert that new times are at hand

154." Something similar happened in synagogues all over the world, when they heard that Louis XVI and the French National Assembly had emancipated the Jewish people. None of these dispersed people fully understood the deep, secret cause of the emotion they felt, but they all listened to this distant sound as a sign. They had no doubt that the destiny of all Israel was at stake in what had just taken place.

II

To keep to the truth, we need to distinguish between two kinds of hues on that day of September 27, 1791: some dark, others showing the flashes of light familiar to Providence.

Which were the darker shades?

So, in 1791, the Constituent Assembly decreed the entry of Jews into society;

On this same date in 1791, almost at the same hour, at the same minute, the Assembly accepted Volney's tribute to the Ruins.

Volney was a member of the Constituent Assembly as a deputy. His book on the Ruins is pretentious, declamatory, even cold and boring. But it was written with a clear anti-religious purpose. This was enough, in those sad days, to exalt him to the skies. The Assembly solemnly accepted the tribute.

What gloomy prophecy was there in this homage and in this acceptance?

Ruins! That, alas, was the conclusion of all the Assembly's work: after two years of toil, it had ended in nothing but disaster. "It has set itself the mission of changing the world. No respect stops it, no venerable majesty intimidates its demolishing decrees... With every blow the Assembly strikes, we hear the institutions of centuries crumble¹."

The Ruins: "It translated the ideas of the XVth century into action; it rushed through the old social edifice like a bull through a glass house, and soon everything was in shambles²."

Ruins! She had substituted the Social Contrai

1 Poujoulat, *La Révolution*, p. 1G5.

2 Ibid. p. 225.

to the Gospel of the Redeemer, the rights of man to the rights of God: how could dust and chaos not respond to such a substitution?

Ruins! The Assembly has placed the axe at the roots of monarchy; others will strike; but it is the Assembly that has prepared the blow. "93 was hidden behind 89, misdirected 1. -The disrepute of royalty, a radical vice of the '91 Constitution, preoccupied the Assembly in the last weeks of its existence; the Constituents backed away from their work; Barnave, Chapelier and Malouet would have liked a severe revision. But passions are not easily corrected, and the Assembly left without having been able to repair its faults, produced by a neglect of morals, traditions and national history. It left having foolishly decreed that none of its members could be part of the next legislature. The Constituent Assembly thus left the field open to ignorance, incapacity, demagoguery and storms. On closing day, the people had oak wreaths in their hands; but they awarded them to Robespierre and Pétion²."

The Ruins at last! Mirabeau had glimpsed their breadth and depth, and regretted having begun them. He, the giant of the Revolution, said sadly ■ "I would despair of having done anything but attach my name to a vast destruction. "When he tried to hold the monarchy back on the rapid slope where he himself had launched it, it was too late. "God makes the storm roar,

i Poujoulat, *La Révolution*, p. 225.

3 Ibid., p.21. and then all of a sudden he gives us back the calm and the blue of the sky; so does not the hand of man, it, unleashes and can no longer hold back h"

Well, it was at the very moment when all these ruins were beginning and were about to pile up, when Mirabeau was dying inconsolable for having prepared them, that, on the one hand, the Assembly madly accepted the tribute of Volney's book with its lugubrious title, and on the other, disregarding all precautions, it said to the Jews: Enter society!

They will indeed enter, but through immense rubble, and what rubble! No century has ever seen such rubble.

III

So a parallel is in order here:

France, giving way to the Jews through its crumbling institutions, reminds us of ancient Jericho, opening the entrance to the Promised Land to the children of Israel through its crumbling walls.

In Jericho, it was the material walls that crumbled; in France, it was the ramparts of institutions.

The Jews who entered Jericho had just emerged from the long captivity of Egypt; the Jews who enter French society have also just undergone an eighteen-year captivity among the nations,

1 Poujoulat, *la Révolution*, p, 200,

Because this people is as vast as the world, and the most prodigious of all peoples, God allows an unparalleled fracas for both entrances. For their entry into the Promised Land, it's the crash of city walls; for their entry into French society, it's the crash of the ancien régime and the Revolution.

These are the similarities, but here are the differences:

At Jericho, armed Ghananeans guarded the walls, determined to defend themselves and repel any assault. Jericho," says the book of Judges, "was closed and well equipped. 11 It took nothing less than an unprecedented miracle to bring victorious and ruthless Israel into the square. The Promised Land was open, but at least, crushed under the walls, the defenders had done their duty.

The same cannot be said of what happened in 1791. The Constituent Assembly and the French people overturned their own defenses, their solid institutions, in front of the besieging Jews, and said to them, after having made the breach themselves: "Enter among us as citizens.

O generous but short-sighted France, have you not dismantled and surrendered yourself?

In Jericho, the rights of God went before Israel, with the sound of trumpets; in France, it is the rights of man, with the revolutionary axe, that are clearing the way.

In Jericho, the miracle opened the breach; apostasy, alas! opens France. The people who entered Jericho were the people of God; whereas those entering French society are the deicide people, still enemies of Jesus Christ.

IV

But is the horizon of this day of September 27, 1791 only what we have just recounted? Is it one of those days of which Scripture says that, because of their calamities and darkness, "the two of them are covered as with sackcloth¹⁵⁵ "? Let us not think so. All that concerns the Jewish people is so vast and complex, so low in the abysses of justice, yet so elevated in the heights of mercy, that one cannot reason about them in the same way as about other peoples. He's special: reasoning must be special for him.

One point of view has always struck us as singularly important in considering this poor, dear people, and that is their obligation to be useful to humankind, even in spite of its hatreds, even in spite of humankind's repugnance;

Indeed, because they were chosen to prepare and present Christ to the rest of mankind, they will be obliged to be of service until the end of time. This role of obligatory service will follow him even into the punishments he will have incurred. For example:

When he was deported and taken captive to Babylon, he became the missionary of Gentiles, and his Bible became known and propagated among the nations;

When the ruin of Jerusalem, his capital, is foretold by Christ as a punishment for his bloodthirsty unbelief, this ruin, already so terrible in itself, acquires even more solemn and instructive proportions, as it is linked, in the ternias that announce and describe it, to that of the end of the world¹ ;

Does wrathful Providence scatter its members everywhere, as justice would do with an executed culprit, in this state it still serves as a profitable example for the salvation of souls and peoples;

In its dispersion, it even serves in another way. For, thrown into the universal, he has become the broker of all Nations. In times when relations were difficult or infrequent, Jews were the porters of peoples, carrying spices and fabrics on their shoulders from one country to another. What a contrast with the missionaries of the Catholic Church! It was said of them that magnificent word of the Bible: How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the one who preaches the good news, who preaches peace and salvation^{156 157}! It was said of the Jews: How useful on the mountains are the feet of the bringer of merchandise!

So it's fair to acknowledge that, even in their situation as guilty outcasts, the Jews could never escape the obligation to be of service. Now, having admitted this, can we suppose that Providence, so attentive to the realization of this admirable strategy, allowed itself to be caught out at the time of one of the most serious phases of this people, that of its entry into the civil and intimate life of the Christian nations, and that the now famous day of September 27, 1791 does not contain, alongside the dark hues we have described, a lightening by which the inconveniences will be brought back and subjected sooner or later to the service of the human race? ¹¹ It's impossible for us to admit only the dark shades; on the contrary, recalling the beautiful expression used by Saint Paul with regard to God's wisdom, *multiformis sapientia Dei*, we believe in the preparation of a dazzling triumph of this Wisdom, placing under its dependence the day of September 27th, which began in such a gloomy manner.

M. de Bonald, who 'showed himself to be not very tender towards the Israelites in the writing that appreciates their emancipation, and in the words that we have reported from him (p. 241-2), could not help being struck by a background to this day of September 27 that his great eye made him glimpse. The most respectable oracles of religion," he says in the same letter, "and the most ancient traditions, teach that the Jews must be called in their turn to the freedom of the children of God. And who knows whether philosophy, which

i Epistle to the Ephesians, ni. 10. seems to be the sole impetus of the mind, is not itself, in this and many other resolutions, the blind instrument of the highest designs? For whenever a great question arises in society, we can be sure that a great motive is present, and that a great decision is not far off.

It is this great providential decision that we salute! Leaving aside the dark hues we have impartially pointed out, we can also, as a sentinel of hope, make out white spots in the new situation that the day of September 27 creates for Israel; we designate them as follows:

This people breaks the yoke;

They enter universal society for the first time;

It is mandated by Providence.

V

Breaking the yoke.

There is a very ancient prophecy that has remained, one might say, forgotten in the world. The time has come, it seems, to bring it out of oblivion:

It was under the patriarchal eve. Isaac, now old and blind, had blessed Jacob, thinking he was blessing Esau. The latter

1 Q-'uvres de M. de Donald, *Mélanges*, t. I, 376. had, moreover, sold Jacob his birthright, and, consequently, the right to the blessing which formed its first prerogative. Jacob, blessed, had scarcely left the patriarch's presence, when Esau entered in his turn, returning from his hunt and counting on the blessing. We know his fury, and also Isaac's profound astonishment, "admiring," says the Sacred Book, "beyond all belief, what had happened, and saying: 'Your brother has received' my blessing, and he will remain blessed."

But let's let the Sacred Book speak for itself:

"Esau uttered a great cry mingled with tears, and said: 'Have you then, my father, but one blessing? I

beseech you to bless me too.

"Isaac was touched and said: "Your blessing will be in the fat of the earth...

"But you shall serve your brother; I have made him your lord. .

"And the old man added: "The time will come when you will shake off his yoke and free yourselves from it."

Such is this ancient prophecy. Now here's how it came to pass^{158 159} : a striking realization!

In Jacob taking the place of Esau, commentators have been unanimous in recognizing the Christian people taking the place of the Jewish people, who were the elders. The Christian people succeeded the Jewish people in their inheritance, in all their rights, and this was because – just as Esau had sold and passed on his right to blessing – the Jewish people had delivered, passed on to the nations Jesus Christ, the source of all blessings: Christ will be delivered to the nations, it was announced, Tradetur gentibus he was!...

What was the result? This:

Isaac, prophesying the fate of Esau – and consequently of the Jews – had said: You shall serve your brother. And yet, for eighteen centuries, have not the Jewish people been, to the letter, the servants of the Christian people? As noted in the previous paragraph, they were peddlers to the nations, bringing them the goods they needed on their backs. ¹¹ It's impossible not to recognize this historical contrast, this self-evident fact: on the one hand, throughout the Middle Ages, the Christian people were, as it were, the sons of the house; on the other hand, the Jewish people were the servants, the subalterns, the serfs. Whatever his pride of race, the sincere Israelite will have the courage to confess: Israel has served the Christian people; I have made him your lord! So, like Esau, of whom it is said that he shuddered with anger, the Jewish people have never borne this yoke except by shuddering, with ill-concealed anger.

¹ S. Luke, chap. xviii, 3? Jewish preponderance

But the ancient prophecy had come to a remarkable conclusion:

The patriarch, after having said: You will serve your brother, had added: And the time will come when you will shake off his yoke and deliver yourselves from it;

This time of deliverance came on September 27, 1791. When, by dint of shrewdness, detours, energy and perseverance, the Jews succeeded in wresting the decree of emancipation from the hesitant hands of the Constituent Assembly, on that day, they shook off the yoke, and delivered themselves from it. One of the oldest and most important prophecies was fulfilled, and no one was the wiser.

How deep and crushing God's purposes are! Here is a patriarch, now old and blind, who from the depths of his tent pitched in Chanaan pronounces harsh and merciful words about his son Esau: and, while he thinks he is pronouncing only about Esau, the Spirit of truth, for whom the centuries are all present, dictates to the old man's lips an oracle that will reach into the last centuries: The time will come when you will shake off his yoke and deliver yourselves from it! .

This breaking of the yoke resulted in an event of minor importance in itself, but highly significant. In our book *Y Entrée des Israélites dans la Société française*, we recounted the humiliating custom observed for five hundred years in Strasbourg against the Jews, which consisted in sounding the horn or trumpet every evening from the cathedral belfry : Warned by these high-pitched sounds, Jews who had obtained permission to spend the day in Strasbourg would leave the city at dusk to sleep elsewhere. Well, the Constituent Assembly had scarcely issued its decree when a small expeditionary force of Hebrews climbed the cathedral tower one evening, seized the famous horn and tore it to pieces. From then on, the bellringer was never heard to utter the words: "Out with the Jews! The leader of the little band had been Cerfberg's son^{160 161}. This was the epilogue to the trial between Strasbourg and Louis XVI's protégé.

VI

Breaking the yoke was, for the old people, the first result of this day; entering universal society was to be the second.

Strangely enough, this people – even though its role had been to be the world's reservoir, since it had provided the world with the Decalogue, the Scriptures and the Messiah – had always lived in isolation from the rest of the human race. Let the reader understand this isolation:

For the first two thousand years of its existence, from Abraham to Jesus Christ, the Jewish people had been carefully nurtured, but separately from the other nations: like a son of a great family who receives a special and careful education. Palestine was their home, their enclosed garden; the prophets were their tutors. The prophets were her tutors. She had been told: "You shall not marry the nations; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, and you shall not take their daughters for your sons"¹⁶². Thanks to this severe isolation, Israel was partly preserved from the monstrous errors of polytheism and idolatry; and when the Messiah came, he found intact in Israel's hands the dogma he needed to lead the world from particular to universal religion, from Judaism to Christianity: the dogma of the unity of God. Such was the first isolation, an isolation of honor; it had lasted two thousand years.

With the Messiah, the Jewish people, no less than the true religion of which it was the guardian, was to pass from the particular to the universal, and from its isolation of honor to the common life of peoples. Jewish history, which had hitherto had only obligatory points of contact with the nations, was to expand and enter into a gentle and magnificent conjunction with universal history. But this was not to be. The Jewish people, jealous of their own race and privileges, refused to make common cause with the rest of mankind, and killed the Messiah who had come to open his arms to all peoples.

Then Israel's isolation began again, but this time it was no longer the isolation of honor, as in Palestine; it was a penal isolation, in the very midst of the nations: Israel no longer resembled a prince's son carefully raised apart, it was the guilty parked away like a convict.

This new isolation, in turn, lasted for almost another two thousand years. Indeed, though scattered and scattered everywhere among the nations, the Jews everywhere remained separated from the rest of mankind. For them, narrow, dark alleyways had replaced the noble Palestinian homes of their ancestors. On the one hand, the prescriptions of the Talmud, full of spite and pride, forced them to keep themselves apart from the nations, in these alleys. But, on the other hand, the Christian nations, in the process of forming, had not wanted to admit, at any price, these men hostile to their Christian constitution, these amliconslilulionnels. A formidable line of demarcation had thus been established between society and the Jews. A particular costume made them immediately recognizable; prohibitions of all kinds prevented them from mingling with the crowd; and countless exceptional laws prevented them from approaching society from any point, which stood before them like a veritable fortress. Ah! how the tables were turned! The Jews, when they possessed Palestine, had not wanted, at the time when the Messiah presented himself as a sublime hyphen, to mingle with the nations: and the nations, in their turn, took no interest whatsoever, for eighteen centuries<, in mingling with them.

And so, to sum up:

Two thousand years of isolation in Palestine, isolation of honour;

Another two thousand years of isolation among the nations, penal isolation;

A total of four thousand years of isolation: such had been the prodigious state of this people, without example in the annals of mankind.

And it was this isolation, as vast as the desert, that the decree of September 27, 1791 put an end to;

This people was about to be mixed with the rest of the world, for the last destinies of society.

Comte de Maistre said: *La Révolution n'est pas un événement, c'est une époque*. A profoundly true statement, and, in particular, with regard to this old people emerging from its isolation of forty centuries

to finally enter, in 1791, into French and universal society: wasn't it an epoch? An imperishable ferment, it was about to be mixed with the world, like leaven. Will it be for good or for evil, for life or for death? We answer, raising our eyes to heaven as we write: for life!

VII

Indeed, let us meditate on M. de Bonald's reflection, quoted above: "The most respectable oracles of Religion and the most ancient traditions teach that the Jews must be called in their turn to the freedom of the children of God. And who knows whether philosophy, which seems to give the impetus to spirits all by itself, is not itself, in this revolution as in many others, Y blind instrument of higher designs!" Philosophy, the blind instrument of higher designs! In a striking phrase, M. de Bonald said the last word on the Jewish question before the Constituent Assembly. This Assembly, superbly philosophical, has, on the one hand, sent Jesus Christ away, and, on the other, let the Jews in: Providence, outraged by this contrast, has let it happen; but accustomed to drawing good from evil, it says: Bring me this people; This is not a call to the Jews; it is merely a command to them.

There is a text from the prophet Isaiah, the interpretation of which is disputed between justice and mercy: "Bring out a people who are blind, though they have eyes", who are deaf, though they have ears*.

Some commentators believe that it is an innate justice that dictates this language to the prophet: "Send out", i.e. expel from the assembly of the children of God a people who do not deserve to be there, because they are blind, even though they have eyes, and deaf, even though they have ears. This interpretation is just and justified². In fact, during the nineteen centuries since i Isaiah, chapter xi.in, 8.

² The main exponents of this interpretation are S. (See Cornelius La Pierre, Commentaries on Isaiah, chapter XLII1.) Christianity, Christian kings and Pontiffs have ensured that the dangerous beings mentioned by the prophet were kept away.

But there is another interpretation according to mercy, equally true: Bring them out, in the sense iïamenez-moié; bring them out of their separate quarters, their dark alleys, where they were parked; This interpretation finds its justification in the day of September 27, 1791: indeed, here they come out! But who is bringing them out? For they are still blind and deaf, and the order given by Providence to bring them out is addressed to a third party;

At the bottom of the emancipatory decree issued by the Constituent Assembly on September 27, there are two names (please reread this decree, p. 245-6):

Louis XVI's name;

11 and the Jacobin Duport;

With Louis XVI, it was Christianity that guided the deaf and blind old people from their separate quarters to Providence. The Christian monarch had undertaken this exit, and the march had begun when, all of a sudden, the Revolution, through Jacobinism, took the place of royal action, and it was in fact Jacobin Duport who brought them about!

In our first book on V Entrée

i This interpretation is developed by Duguet, in eloquent and touching terms, in his *Traité des principes de la foi chrétienne*, IIP partie, chapitre xvi. – It is perfectly supportable, for among the? different meanings given to the magnificent forty-third chapter of Isaiah is that of the conversion of the Jews, and Duzuet's interpretation ties in very well with the context.

of the Israelites, put forward this thought: "Hell, when it suspects that the time of mercy for the remnants of Israel is approaching, will strive to render these remnants unfit for the purposes of God 1 ; It was on this day, September 2, that his infernal interposition began to shine forth with terrible brilliance. Providence gave the order to bring the old people out of their isolation, behind schedule and

in reserve. One might have hoped that either a Sovereign Pontiff or, at least, a very Christian king would have been led by circumstances to take the lead in such a fine movement; but no, it is the satanic Revolution that comes to say to Providence, with a sneer that is not imaginary: It is I who bring them to you! And you'll use them, if you can, after they've gone through the education I'll give them...

O divine and inscrutable Providence, you accept these blind and deaf volunteers with their spirit hostile to the Church, you accept them from the hands of the Revolution, which brings them. But one day the world will realize that it is not to you, O divine Providence, but to the impious Revolution that was reserved this immense disappointment which closes all the enterprises of the Esprit of darkness: Erravimits163 164, we were mistaken in emancipating them!

VIII

As an Israelite turned Catholic, deeply devoted to both religious and historical truth, we have had to judge severely the period from 1789 to 1791, deploring the pride of an. We deplored and condemned the sacrilegious exaltation of the rights of man over the abasement of the rights of God; we deplored and condemned a thousand times over the particularly painful coincidence of the dismissal of Jesus Christ and the recall of the Jews.

From this point of view, no thanks can be given to the legislators of 1791: they would have been better off sparing Jesus Christ and leaving us in our back alleys!

But, putting aside the clouds of revolutionary impiety, gratitude is allowed to go straight to the heart of France; and then, thank you, oh thank you to that heart which was the merciful instrument of our deliverance and rehabilitation!

O France, you may have been the victim of fatal errors and committed great faults; but there are magnanimous resolutions that only you dare to conceive, selfless undertakings that only you are in a position to accomplish. Only you can, on a certain day, take up the common cause and fight for it. You alone have delivered the oppressed!... Like a ship beaten on the ocean of centuries, the unfortunate, trembling Jew could land nowhere. But one day, you said: Have mercy. At that moment he cried out: Land, land, until he cried out: Jesus! Jesus!

O France, if, at different times in your history, you have banished us from your land, you have also been, for us, the first smile of long-suffering Providence, which at last drops its wrath. It is you whom it has charged with announcing peace to the humiliated remnants of Jacob; it is you perhaps whom it will charge with recalling them one day from all points of the dispersion! In your land, then, the poor wandering Jew has received permission to halt his wandering march; and it is in your bosom that he has found that fixed something which bears that sweet name: A home! Thanks, then, to you, O noble land of France; and thanks to you, children of France, who, first among all peoples, have stretched out their hand to us, who have looked upon us as men, and who have told us to sit down and make our home with you. Ah! if the pilgrim's prayer and blessing always bring good fortune, O France, our blessing, the blessing of the pilgrim of the centuries, is upon you... On you, so that your families and your cities may once again prosper; on you, so that God may deliver you from all inner evil, and reward you for having loved us; on you, so that in your turn, for the home you have given us, you may remain, O France, you may never disappear, but remain; and may this saying of a freedman like us be true to the end of the centuries: Every man has two homelands: his own, and France*!